

THE
CHURCHLESS AND POOR
IN OUR LARGE TOWNS

REV. R. MILNE

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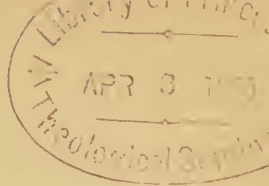
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
THE HOME MISSION WORK OF THE
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

BY
REV. ROBERT ✓ MILNE, M.A.

TOWIE

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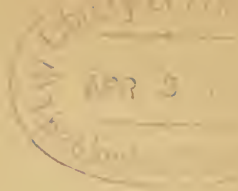
Two reasons in particular have influenced the writer in devoting special attention to the problem of the Churchless and poor. The first, that the condition of the lapsed population is one which has now, and not a moment too soon, begun to attract public attention as a blot upon our Christian civilisation ; the second, that, so far as he is aware, this subject has not yet been fully dealt with in its many-sided aspects by any previous writer. Some of those who are most competent to deal with it are prevented from doing so by want of leisure. Others seem to regard the solution of this problem as impracticable, and shrink from grappling with it in despair of final success. But, those who consider the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ an infallible remedy for healing the spiritual maladies of our race, and the Churches as the best organisations for its propagation, have no right to despair of this, any more than of other great spiritual

problems with which it has to deal. Fully conscious of the difficulties that beset the present inquiry, the writer would not have entered on so great a task, had he not been more hopeful of a solution than some, and had already had occasion to treat of the subject in some of its more important aspects. From his isolated position, he has had to encounter difficulties which would not have met others who had readier access to the sources of information. However much he may have failed in the subject he has taken in hand, he is, at any rate, conscious of an honest attempt to draw the attention of the public to this pressing question, and to interest the members of the Churches in it; and he is not without hope that others may follow more successfully in his track. His object has been to view the question of the Churchless primarily in relation to the Church of Scotland, but he has never left out of consideration how large a factor the other Churches, as also the State, are in its full solution. A slight repetition of facts or observations may be noticed, but this was partly unavoidable, in consequence of the same subject being treated under different aspects in successive chapters, and partly intentional, in order to enforce more strongly some important truth.

In the present work attention has been exclusively

directed to the question of the Churchless in towns. One reason for this is that it presents quite different aspects in its relation to rural districts, and requires a different treatment from the other. Another is, that the writer desired more leisure to consider the question in its bearing on the country districts, and more information than he at present possesses ; but should the present publication answer its purpose, he hopes, God sparing him, to give his attention to this aspect of the question also. Meanwhile, he takes this opportunity of tendering his sincere thanks to those who have supplied him with information, or have in any other way been of service.

MANSE OF TOWIE,
25th March 1884. .



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THE
CHURCHLESS AND POOR IN OUR
LARGE TOWNS.

INTRODUCTION.

A CHURCH, in the large sense in which it will be often used here, is a divinely instituted agency for bringing the Gospel to bear on the hearts and consciences of men. Its function is twofold—to minister the means of grace to its members and adherents, and to bring the Churchless within its fold. Any association of men calling itself a Christian Church, which regards only the former of these objects and neglects the latter, will soon become shrivelled and effete. The Church of Christ, by the very terms of its Founder's parting commission, is an aggressive institution. By this spirit of aggressiveness it most surely prospers; by settling on its lees it will most surely become weak. An earthly kingdom may

weaken itself by too aggressive a spirit, if the energy and money which should go to consolidate it internally are bestowed on the undue extension of its territory. But not so the Kingdom of Christ. It prospers by extension; it stagnates by resting satisfied with the conquests already made.

When the foundations of the Christian Church were laid by Christ and His disciples, it was under external circumstances different from those which exist at the present day. But the wisdom of the Divine Founder is clearly seen in His laying down the general principles only of all Church organisation, instead of a definite plan to be followed in all ages and under all circumstances. The Jewish Church was intended mainly for one people and to last for a definite time, and hence its constitution was strictly defined; its laws and its observances, its form of government and discipline, were grafted on Eastern manners and ideas; but the Christian Church is intended to be all-embracing in its aim, and to last through all time. It was therefore necessary that its constitution should not be rigid and stereotyped like that of the Jewish Church, but should have, along with the eternal and immutable principles on which its foundations were laid, a certain elasticity in its external constitution to adapt it to the end of its establishment. Hence, there is much about the Church, as an outward organisation, that is left to be devised and built up by sanctified human wisdom

so as to adapt it to the wants of the times; and this power of adaptation, instead of derogating from the wisdom of its Founder, is a clear proof of His divine prescience.

But, amid all the variations of outward ecclesiastical constitution and government, this principle of aggressiveness on the kingdom of darkness remains the same. That Church which most zealously carries out the parting commission of the Divine Founder of our religion to preach the Gospel to every creature, that is not only zealous in the building up of believers, but in bringing in the outcasts, whether she can lay claim to so-called Apostolical succession or not, is surely carrying out Christ's own idea of what His Church should be. Every Christian worker, fired with zeal for the extension of Christ's kingdom, be he minister or layman, presbyter or priest, is a successor of the apostles in the sense in which he can truly be—viz., in witness-bearing for Christ.

It is with the second function of a Christian Church—that which respects the ingathering of the Churchless—that we have in these pages chiefly to do. And, in considering the various Christian Churches in this land that claim to fulfil this important function, I select the one that has the greatest responsibility, as well as the greatest advantages for this end—the Church of Scotland.

I start, then, from the position of the Established

Church of Scotland as the National Church—national in a sense that will hardly be denied, in that, through her parochial divisions or parishes, she spreads a network over the kingdom, and has in each of these a religious establishment for bringing the means of grace to bear on the people. What, then, let us ask, are her privileges as such, and her duties springing therefrom, to the Churchless and poor? If it can be shown that her advantages for this end are exceptional, it will equally appear that her responsibilities are so, and that only in making the most unwearied and self-denying efforts for gathering in the outcasts can she be fulfilling her duty to her living Head.

Among the chief of her advantages for the purpose above mentioned may be classed *her parochial economy*, or the legally defined territories in which her ministers carry on their work. Parochial divisions existed long before the Reformation; and although various Acts from 1560 to 1843 gave power to alter them more or less, there was little subdivision made of the larger parishes up to the latter date, but in a good many cases two or more neighbouring small parishes were united into one. During the past forty years, however, a considerable subdivision of the larger parishes has taken place, so that the parishes of the Church of Scotland number one-third more than they did in 1843. Now, these parochial divisions constitute well-defined territories for the labours of the several incumbents; and, nominally, each is responsible for

the condition of all the souls within his own, except such as may be cared for by ministers of other Christian denominations. This responsibility laid on each parish minister for the spiritual condition of all within his own territory is a step, and a most important step, towards the full ingathering of all into the Christian fold. If the practice corresponded with the theory, no better scheme could be devised; and no one would be free from blame that had not gathered in all the Churchless within the territory assigned him.

Further, the Church of Scotland has the additional advantage for the ingathering of the Churchless *in the existence of a certain minimum endowment within each of those parochial divisions* for the purpose of supporting religious ordinances for the benefit of the people. Most of these endowments arise from teinds or tithes, which are a fixed charge upon the rental of land, originating in gifts to the Church by the pious and benevolent of early times. At the time of the Reformation, more than one-third of the land of the country was in the hands of the Church. In the period of the Reformation upheaval, a large part of these lands was seized by the laity or the Crown, and but a small portion accrued to the Reformed Church. But in course of time, the State stepped in and made a certain payment to the Church, being a fixed proportion of the rental in every parish, obligatory, and thus a permanent endowment was secured.

The money for the payment of these tithes did not come from the State—never, in fact, belonged to the State. What the latter did was to commute irregular payments from lands into a regular and permanent endowment for the minister who served the cure.¹ These endowments exist in all the original parishes; and in those which have been erected *quoad sacra* since 1844, there is also a permanent endowment raised by voluntary contributions of not less than £100 a-year. Both those of the first and second class may be increased by annual and voluntary contributions, and many of them are so; but the fact to be specially noted here is that there is in every case as much of an endowment as prevents the minister's entire dependence on his people for his means of living, and hence the temptation to mould his doctrines to their taste. This system of endowments has also the effect of allowing the minister to give as much attention to the poorer as to the wealthier inhabitants of his parish, without any risk of suffering in his pecuniary interests. There cannot, therefore, be that competition between his worldly interests and his spiritual duties which often arises when he is in a great measure dependent on the liberality of his people. As regards the Church at large, the existence of a permanent endowment in each parish

¹ See a succinct history of tithes in 'Handbook of the Church of Scotland.' By Rev. James Rankin, D.D., Muthill. P. 117. Messrs Blackwood & Sons: 1881.

keeps her energies from being dissipated, and her usefulness from being impaired, in the raising of large funds for the sustentation of her clergy, and allows of the voluntary liberality of her members flowing into channels which may water and quicken the lapsed masses. These two conditions, then, of legally defined territories and a permanent endowment in each parish, give an advantage to the Church of Scotland for gathering in the Churchless possessed by no unestablished Church in the country.

To this may be added, *a long and honoured history*—a history bright with many heroic deeds and contentings for the right. From the time of the Reformation downwards, she has been the guardian of religious liberty, the patron of education, the promoter of civilisation, the helper of the poor. And in more recent times, though her relation, like that of all other religious establishments, to the country has considerably changed, she has still to tell of good deeds accomplished for the nation—of many blessings imparted to the young and the poor. Of the latter, she has far more within her fold than any other Church in the land.

The compact between the Church and the State implies both reciprocal advantages and reciprocal duties. The State guarantees to the Church perfect freedom of action within the terms of her constitution; gives a legal sanction to the territorial divisions of the country for ecclesiastical purposes, and guarantees

for each a limited endowment; or, to speak more properly, guarantees that the endowments anciently provided by private benevolence and now commuted into a tithe payment shall be regularly paid to those who serve the cures. The Church, accepting these conditions as the best guarantee for her spiritual freedom and usefulness, agrees to open her doors to all—to work territorially—to be the helper of the poor by providing them with the means of grace without money and without price, and to labour with all the advantages at her command to bring in the outcasts, and to proclaim the Gospel to every home. “We have accepted,” says Dr Rankine in his excellent closing address as Moderator of the General Assembly, 1883—“we have accepted our position, and we enjoy our privileges on the distinct understanding that we shall endeavour to supply means of grace commensurate with the requirements of our parishes.”

Such being the case, it is natural to ask why the Church of Scotland has failed to accomplish one of the great ends of her existence—why, with the help of those advantages referred to, there are yet so many thousands and tens of thousands of our countrymen living outside of all Church ordinances, not a few of whom are as much beyond the influence of the Christian religion as if they were living in the midst of heathendom? The extent and the nature of the lapsing from Church ordinances in our cities and

towns will by-and-by occupy our attention. The instances wherein the State has failed to fulfil its duty in its compact with the Church will be considered in a following chapter. Meanwhile, let it be taken for granted, what no one at all acquainted with our Churchless populations will deny, that an evil of this kind, gigantic in its proportions, certainly exists, and is most likely extending, in spite of all the efforts of the Churches. Confining our attention in the meantime to the Church of Scotland, our next inquiry must be, What are the chief causes of this failure—those causes, in particular, for which the Church herself can hardly be blamed?

The first of these is *the want of proper expansiveness in her constitution*. At the time when the Church was established, Scotland was poor and limited in population. Manufactures and mining, by which the country is now enriched, and the population in certain centres largely and suddenly increased, were then hardly known. Commerce with foreign countries was limited, and most of our largest towns did not contain one-tenth of their present populations. On the other hand, many districts of the Highlands were either unpeopled or contained a mere sprinkling of inhabitants, and required little or no pastoral supervision. The division of the country into parishes had taken place at a remote period of its history when the population was sparse and very differently arranged from what it is at

present. At the Reformation, when the Church was established on its present basis, very much the same arrangement of parishes was adhered to.¹ During the time between the Church's first establishment and the passing of the Endowment Act in 1844, as already stated, very little was done in the way of breaking down large or populous parishes, though there was more than one Act passed for the purpose; because, either the conditions of disjunction were difficult of fulfilment, or the means were not at hand for adequately endowing the new parishes that might be created. In former times, voluntary effort to supplement the want of expansiveness in the Church's constitution was hardly thought of; and the State, which required of the Church the full supply of spiritual ordinances to the country, did not supply her with the means of adequately fulfilling her duty. It demanded of her the full tale of bricks, but withheld the straw. Hence, up to a comparatively recent period, little had been done to meet the great increase of the population in the larger towns and the multiplication of thriving villages caused by the increased prosperity of the country. Highland and other parishes came to be more thickly peopled, and families were found ten or even twenty miles from church for whom no adequate spiritual provision was made. The consequence of this state of things was, that in

¹ See chapter on "Parishes," in Duncan's 'Parochial Ecclesiastical Law.'

many of our large towns, and in some of our country parishes, people left off church-going because there was no church within their reach, or having empty pews to receive them. The better classes could generally find the requisite accommodation, the poorer were often crowded out. This state of things continued till Dr Chalmers, in the year 1835, started his scheme of Church Extension, and by his zealous and eloquent advocacy of the cause, was able at the end of seven years to report an addition of about 220 chapels to the ecclesiastical strength of the Church of Scotland. He started his scheme under the mistaken apprehension that, if the churches were erected by voluntary contributions, the State would endow them. But the time for receiving State aid for Church endowment had gone. In the meantime, the population had been rapidly tending to certain centres; villages were enlarging into towns, and towns into great cities. Vast multitudes of the population were growing up beyond the means of grace. The Endowment Act of 1844, whereby, when the Church provides a certain amount of permanent endowment for a church, and marks out a territory for the minister, the State gives its sanction to the proceedings and it is erected into a parish *quoad sacra*—this Act, on which the noble Endowment Scheme of the late Dr Robertson was founded, did much to remedy the evil, by allowing of the subdivision of large and populous parishes into workable districts

similar to the original parishes. Still, very much remains to do among the lapsed populations. A permanent endowment of even £100 or £120 a-year implies the gathering of a large sum of money. In the case of the parishes erected under the Endowment Scheme, the original endowment is often largely supplemented by church-door collections and seat-rents; but the parishes erected in the very poorest districts cannot depend on this source of income. To obtain the services of an experienced minister, and to establish the necessary agencies for the proper working of the parish, the endowments for these districts would need to be very large; and hence, while those districts whose populations are able in a great measure to help themselves have had little difficulty in obtaining the necessary endowments, the poorer are left unprovided for; and this, and not any intentional neglect on the part of the Church herself, is one of the principal causes of her failure to overtake the evangelising of the poorest and most spiritually destitute districts of our large towns.

Another cause of the Church's failure to overtake this work, and one intimately connected with the former, is *the departure from the proper parochial economy in the spiritual administration of large towns*. What has been well styled the "commercial" or "shopkeeping" system, has prevailed more or less in most of our town congregations for a considerable time past. In other words, town ministers are, from

the necessities of the system, hardly parish ministers at all, but simply pastors of their several congregations that meet in the parish church. The practice of charging high rents in town churches, and the rapidly increasing populations of the parishes, have very much conduced to this state of things. Why the practice of charging seat-rents came to be introduced, it is now somewhat difficult to determine. It might well be worth the money and trouble to make a thorough investigation into the subject, and to ascertain whether the lands originally mortified in the neighbourhood of towns for the support of Christian ordinances, as these towns increased, were laid hold of and their value added to the common good of the town, on the condition of the municipalities paying a certain sum therefrom for the minister's maintenance; and whether, in course of time, the town councils, in order to recoup their outlay from the common funds, introduced the system of charging seat-rents. It is very possible that in not a few cases, were the original endowments available, they would have sufficed, with the great increase of their original value, to endow a sufficient number of charges to overtake the whole spiritual destitution. But the charging of high seat-rents in town parish churches, however it originated, has had the effect of supplying ordinances and pastoral superintendence to the comparatively well-to-do, to the exclusion of the very poor. This privilege, if privilege it can be called, of

renting the sittings in the churches, is not confined to the inhabitants of the parish. All who choose to come from any quarter of the town are admitted on condition of paying the stipulated amount, and of there being room. Hence, in spite of anything the minister can do, his charge becomes congregational instead of parochial. Not a tithe of his congregation may be parishioners; the great majority will likely be scattered over the town of which his parish forms a part. He has, therefore, either of two courses before him — to confine his pastoral work to his parish, to the neglect of the many from beyond it who are his hearers from week to week, and who have a claim on his week-day ministrations; or, giving his attention to the members of his congregation, who in general demand all his time and strength, to neglect the interests of his parish as such. But even when, as some have attempted to do, he gives a good deal of his attention to the spiritually destitute within his parish, the influence exerted upon them can be neither great nor permanent. He cannot bring them into the parish church, for it is perhaps already full; or if not, they dislike to be seen among their betters. If he is able to gather a few into mission-halls and there address to them the words of life, they are only temporarily interested, and ready, without a permanent attachment to a church by membership, to fall back into their former state. This system of pure congregationalism has grown up

in our large towns in spite of the wishes or occasional exertions of the ministers themselves. It has sprung from a variety of causes, and it has been one of the chief obstacles to the thorough evangelising of the lapsed.

A third cause of the Church's failure to overtake the spiritual destitution of the country is one which has already been casually alluded to under the first head—viz., *the rapid increase of the population in large towns and other centres of industry*, making it difficult for the Church, by mere voluntary efforts, to keep pace in her supply of ordinances with the great increase of the population. In mining and manufacturing districts workmen converge from all parts of the country, and in a few years, that which was perhaps a barren wild becomes alive with a teeming population. We have only to compare the present population of such parishes, including the *quoad sacra* parishes erected out of them, as Old and New Monkland in Lanarkshire, with what they were fifty years ago, to find what an immense concourse of people mining and manufacturing operations have drawn together in so short a time. In the same time, Glasgow has increased by 483,000 (including its suburbs); Edinburgh, by 100,000; Dundee, by 92,000; Aberdeen, by 48,000, and so on. How great an extension of ecclesiastical and spiritual agency on the part of all the Churches is necessary to meet this rapid increase can easily be seen. Then,

again, though the population of the purely agricultural districts is diminishing, and the larger part of those who migrate from them goes to swell the increase of the large towns, this does not imply the withdrawal of any spiritual agency from the rural districts to help on the evangelising of the towns. Each parish, though half the population should leave it, requires the same parochial machinery for its use as before.

A fourth cause of the failure of the Church of Scotland to overtake the spiritual destitution of the country *arises from the secessions which from time to time have taken place from her ranks, in a great measure, through the existence of Patronage.* While the vast amount of spiritual energy displayed by Dissenting Churches is frankly admitted; while the liberality of their members and the enthusiasm of their office-bearers have claimed the admiration of an unprejudiced public, there is still a consideration which will force itself on that public contemplating the great work in the country still awaiting the Churches to do. That consideration is, that, had the money expended during the past forty years in maintaining rival religious ordinances by Churches having the same Bible, the same creed, and preaching the same Gospel, in places where they were not required, been expended in evangelising the lapsed districts territorially, the problem of spiritual destitution of the country might have been solved. Some of the seceding Churches, when working territorially, have

done excellent work among the Churchless in large towns. But, so far as they act on the voluntary principle, that work is sadly hampered and curtailed.

The fact, however, still remains, that in many places, especially in our large villages, there is a great superabundance of religious establishments, weakening one another, and involving a useless expenditure of money, that might be far better expended in the bringing in of the Churchless into the Christian fold. The weakness accruing to the Established Church through the secession of 1843, diverted for a time her attention from the problem of the ingathering of the lapsed, and has allowed them to increase even in a greater ratio than the increase of the population. The dissenting Presbyterian Churches, in their earnest struggles to maintain the ordinances of religion in the churches already planted, have also been unable to do much in this direction; and so it is, that through the weakening of the Church of Scotland by the secessions that have taken place from her ranks, and though in all the branches vast sums of money have been voluntarily raised for religious purposes, the problem of the gathering in of the outcasts yet remains to be solved.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE NUMBERS AND CONDITION OF THE
LAPSED POPULATIONS IN LARGE TOWNS.

THE very first step towards the solution of the problem of religious destitution in large towns is to make inquiry into the number and condition of the lapsed. If there are no other accurate means of ascertaining these, then it becomes the Church or Churches interested to make a full and accurate investigation of the facts of the case. The true physician makes a careful diagnosis of his patient's symptoms ere he ventures to prescribe; for, if he prescribe at random, or on careless inquiry, into the symptoms, he may kill where he meant to cure. So, there can be no better foundation for Christian work among the irreligious and non-church-going than a thorough inquiry into the facts of the case. In this chapter,¹ we exclude the better classes among the Churchless, and confine our attention to those who inhabit the densely crowded and poorer localities of our towns. Now, how are their number

¹ This exclusion has reference to the consideration of the condition of the lapsed, not to their sum-total.

and condition to be ascertained? Not, I answer, through any Government religious census, however desirable in some respects. Only missionaries, Bible-women, and others intimately acquainted with the populations among whom the Churchless are chiefly to be found, can tell with tolerable accuracy who among them are connected with any Church or not. Many will profess at first their connection with some branch of the visible Church, who will be found on further inquiry to have no Church connection at all. In a general way, it is possible, by ascertaining the membership of the several churches in a large town, and multiplying the number by three, that the average numbers connected with the Churches may be ascertained; and then, subtracting this from the total population, the numbers having no Church connection, including the population of all ages, may be roughly guessed. Praiseworthy attempts have been made to furnish a general estimate of the non-church-going in some of our largest towns—Glasgow especially; and though their absolute accuracy may not be depended on, yet, when from different data, and by different calculations, the same, or nearly the same, result is reached, we may have the assurance that the error in the estimation cannot be very great. In other cases, the numbers have been ascertained by direct inquiry, but even such a means of ascertaining the numbers, for the reason above given, cannot be absolutely correct, unless the results have been verified by

agents working in, and well acquainted with, the district. About thirteen years ago, several attempts were made to ascertain the non-church-going in Glasgow, and the conclusions which were reached by independent inquirers all pointed to the same general result.

In the year 1870, the Rev. James Johnston of Free St James's Church, Glasgow, published a striking pamphlet, entitled, 'Religious Destitution in Glasgow,' in which he calls attention to the condition of the vast population living beyond the means of grace, and by a series of careful calculations, comes to the conclusion that there were 132,251 of the nominally Protestant population of Glasgow outside of all Christian fellowship, and that, notwithstanding the zeal of the Churches, the number was increasing. "It is a sad fact," he says, "that in spite of many noble and generous efforts on the part of many ministers and merchants of late years, and notwithstanding many gracious manifestations of the influences of the Spirit of God, the destitute population of our city goes on increasing. We keep our ground relatively, but not absolutely. . . . The efforts of the Church have not near kept pace with the increase of the population."

In the same year (1870) an Association was formed, styled, "An Association for Promoting the Religious and Social Improvement of the City." Next year, this Association issued a report on the

religious condition of Glasgow. In this, by means of various investigations, and by a comparison of the statistics of Church attendance and membership with the whole Protestant population, they came to the conclusion that there were 130,000 within the city "who are habitually neglecting all public means of grace, and this with reference to the Protestant population only." Again, the late Alexander Whitelaw, Esq., M.P. for Glasgow, to whom the Church of Scotland owes a debt of gratitude that may well enshrine his memory in the hearts of her members for many generations, proceeding on careful statistics as to the non-church-going population compiled by a committee of the Presbytery of Glasgow, gives the result of his inquiries in a pamphlet, entitled, 'A Statement of Church Statistics, with remarks on Church Work. Glasgow: 1871.' In this pamphlet, by an intricate series of calculations, he comes to the same general conclusion with the other two authorities mentioned as to the number of the Churchless; while, with reference to the population of the whole Presbytery of Glasgow, he arrives at the following among other conclusions:—

"(1) There is a larger Roman Catholic population than the population connected with the Church of Scotland.

"(2) All the Presbyterian Churches together have only one-half of the population connected with them.

"(3) The population which has no real connection

with any Church is as large as that connected with any of the Presbyterian Churches.”—P. 15.

In Edinburgh, the religious destitution in proportion to the population was at the period referred to not less appalling. From the reports of the City Mission and otherwise, it was calculated to contain from 50,000 to 60,000 of all ages outside the Churches—not, of course, all destitute of the means of grace, but though in some cases enjoying the benefit of missionary and other spiritual ministrations, yet having no Church connection. In one of the soul-stirring appeals of the Endowment Committee composed by the venerated founder of the Endowment Scheme, the late Dr James Robertson, it is stated that the fact was forced upon the Committee’s conviction by proofs which they dared not attempt to controvert, that, of the gross population of 714,430 souls contained in the towns under review, there was in all probability more than a third part—that is, upwards of 230,000 immortal beings—who, though living in the midst of a Christian land, are living in a state of alienation from the commonwealth of Israel, “without God and without hope in the world.”

Again, the Committee on Christian Life and Work in the years 1872 and 1873 issued queries to the kirk-sessions of the Church embracing a column for those not connected with any Church. In many of the country parishes, this query could be answered with tolerable accuracy, but in the large parishes of

the towns, a full answer to the query was next to impossible, unless the minister through missionary or other agency had the statistics at command. Nevertheless, reports on the non-church-going were sent in from 507 parishes, embracing a population, exclusive of Roman Catholics, of 1,111,454, of whom 161,296, or nearly one-seventh of the whole, were represented as neglecting Church ordinances. For the reason already given—viz., that, in the large towns, where spiritual destitution is greatest, there would be the greatest difficulty in furnishing the returns, and consequently fewer returns in proportion made—this proportion of one in seven of the population as non-church-going would be rather under than above the mark when applied to the whole population of Scotland. But, suppose we take off 300,000 for the present Roman Catholic population, which is nearly the number claimed as belonging to them, and divide the remaining population by seven, and suppose the ratio of those neglecting Church ordinances to the whole Protestant population is the same as it was ten years ago, we shall still have nearly half a million of the inhabitants of this country outside of all Church connection. Some, however, believe that the outlying population, instead of diminishing, is increasing; or at any rate, that if there are fewer than before of the purely lapsed population, there is an increasing number of those who have nothing more than a nominal Church connection.

Reference has been made to the non-church-going population of the two largest cities of the kingdom ; but, if we come to the smaller towns, we shall find the religious condition of many of them very little better. The Committee on Christian Life and Work, in their report to the Assembly of 1872, say—" Many country towns are almost as completely church-going as the rural districts ; others have their thousands who practically live outside of all the Churches, the proportion of this class being often quite as high as in the great cities. The towns so described are almost all mining and manufacturing towns, in which the territorial means of grace have been within a generation far outgrown by the population. The proportion of non-church-goers in such towns is frequently from one-fourth to one-third of the inhabitants. Out of 34,000 in one large parish, 10,000 are believed to belong to no Church. In another mining district, six parishes which represent a population of 32,000 are reported to contain almost 9000 non-church-goers."

Now, of the large numbers of neglecters of Church ordinances here given, it is to be remembered (1) That there is a considerable number of young children, who, of course, having to submit to the condition of their parents, are reckoned along with them in the category of the non-church-going. (2) That it would not be correct to say of even all the adults that they are beyond the means of grace ; for many

of them, though prevented from poverty and other reasons from attending church, are yet frequent attenders at prayer-meetings, and as exemplary in their home religious duties as those who are attenders on public ordinances.

It is a matter of regret that in none of the large towns, so far as I have been able to discover, have there been anything like reliable statistics of the lapsed populations obtained to the present date. Whether, therefore, there has been an increase or diminution of the spiritual destitution prevailing some ten or twelve years ago, it is impossible with any certainty to say. On the one hand, in such towns as Edinburgh and Glasgow, a vast improvement has been made in the dwellings of the poor. Many of the worst of the slums have been cleared out and decent dwellings erected in their stead. By this and other means of sanitary improvement, the death-rate, especially in Glasgow, has largely diminished, and the physical condition of many of the poorer classes sensibly improved. On the other hand, the population in the large towns during the period referred to has so rapidly increased, that the religious denominations have not been able to keep pace in the extension of religious ordinances with the increase of the population.¹ No doubt, there has been great activity during that period in church-building, especially on the part of the Church of Scotland. Many new

¹ See Appendix I.

parishes have sprung up in towns and crowded villages. Great efforts have been made to meet the wants of the destitute population ; but for the poorest of the poor—those who are utterly unable to help themselves—there has not been a supply of Church ordinances corresponding to that for the average working man and the better classes. Hence, it is to be feared that, notwithstanding the great improvement in the waste places here and there effected both in the physical and spiritual condition of many of the poorest in our large towns, the spiritual destitution as a whole has more than kept pace with the supply of Church ordinances. But, taking the most charitable view of the numbers of the lapsed—supposing even that, instead of an increase, there has been a diminution since 1874, still, the problem before us of so many thousands of our countrymen untouched by the Churches is sufficiently appalling.

We now leave the region of statistics and address ourselves to the sad inquiry as to the condition of the Churchless, taking our descriptions either from personal observation or from the reports of others who have made themselves personally acquainted with them. The remarks about to be made will apply to the worst cases as a rule, because it is only by sounding the deepest deeps that we can fathom aright the misery and danger to which the neglect of this class of the population leads. A mere statement

of numbers, especially of numbers so great that the sum-total can hardly be taken in by the mind, is little calculated to make us realise to the full extent the degradation and misery of those who are our own flesh and blood. We require to look at classes of the lapsed more closely, and at isolated cases—to weigh a large number of separate facts—to regard the subject in the concrete, in order to estimate aright the gravity of the situation and realise our individual responsibility.

Among the non-church-going in towns, we must distinguish various classes and conditions. It is an error to class them all in the same category of the physically and morally degraded. A considerable number of those outside the Churches are to be found among the well-to-do working men and among the middle and upper classes—some of them persons of great intelligence and highly respected in their own social circle. A certain number of these—it is impossible to say how many—are attentive enough to their private religious duties, though, for some reason or other, they do not connect themselves with any Church. In neglecting to do so, however, they place themselves at an enormous disadvantage for the cultivation of their spiritual life. They cannot but be conscious that they are living in disobedience to the injunctions of the Word of God, and refusing to follow the example of His Son. Often, an enforced absence from the house of God for a certain

time begets religious indifference, and even creates an unwillingness to return, so that a gradual lapsing from Church ordinances is the result. The religious condition of these does not present an insoluble problem. There is nothing in their outward circumstances to make reformation impossible. It is often the want of Christian sympathy that is at the root of their indifference. They are mingling with Christian professors in the daily walks of life. They are continually coming in contact with Christian agencies, and though their repugnance to public Church ordinances be difficult to surmount, the Church requires no new agencies for their improvement. The case of other classes of well-to-do people neglecting Church ordinances will be considered farther on in Chapter X.

We now come to the consideration of a very different class outside of religious ordinances—viz., the poverty-stricken, the vicious, the irreligious, who through poverty or vice are debarred, or debar themselves, from the house of God. We stand now looking down into that "Woeland" which exists in all our large towns side by side with our high Christian civilisation. There is misery, there is degradation here, such as the vast majority of the well-to-do members of our Churches have little conception of. But, let it not be supposed that the physical and moral darkness in those spiritually destitute regions is unrelieved by any light; for often here, even

amid the most desolate surroundings, there flourish Christian graces as pure and bright as are to be found in any rank of life.¹ Sympathy, self-sacrifice, contentment, and humble trust in God, are often conspicuous among the poorest of our non-church-going populations. I remember meeting, when visiting in one of our large towns, as bright an instance of humble piety, unfaltering trust in God, and assurance of future bliss, in one who scarce knew where she could get her next meal, as could anywhere else be found. Where piety does flourish here, it is generally of the highest type, nourished amid many outward disadvantages which deepen religious fervour and strengthen faith. On many a bed, with poverty stamped in every corner of the apartment, lie pain-tossed patients, thankful for the smallest pittance of charity, as trustful and hopeful as if their life had been one bright sunshine. Many a well-to-do Christian, on whom God's afflicting hand has not been laid, might learn by such bedsides lessons of Christian faith and patience and thankfulness which would do him a world of good.

Turn we now to the darker side of the picture in order to contemplate the wretchedness and the vice that, lying at the base of our social fabric,

¹ See cases of Sarah and Ann J——, the one confined to bed for sixteen years, and the other for thirty-one, as related in 'Life Work ; or, The Link and the Rivet.' By L. N. R. Chap. ii.

poison the springs of existence, and make so large a portion of our population a curse instead of a blessing to the world. So injurious to life are the conditions of the existence of those inhabiting many of the most wretched localities, that but for the fact of their being replenished by some above that are every now and then sinking in the social scale, their population would sensibly diminish. Now and again families or individuals are emigrating from the country with the flush of health upon their cheek, and trained in church-going habits, into our large towns in hope of remunerative employment. If they continue to enjoy health and strength, if the seekers for work are fortunate enough to obtain regular employment, then the demons of poverty and misery may be kept from the door. But woe to them, if smitten down with sickness, or thrown idle through slackness of work, especially if they are the heads of families who are dependent upon them. Manfully will they struggle for a time to keep the wolf from the door; but by-and-by the terrible struggle against poverty comes; the children cry for bread, and there is none to give them; one piece of furniture after another goes to the pawnshop to relieve a temporary pinch; hope struggles with despair, but misfortune still broods over them. At length, the Sunday garments, in which the parents were proud to appear in the house of God, must be pledged for bread and sickbed expenses. The comfortable home must be

left. Poverty compels them to seek some hovel amid the degraded classes of the population, where the bad air and wretched surroundings make ill-health a constant dweller, and they are seen in church no more. Need we wonder if the sickening air and depressing circumstances of their lot drive them to the brink of despair, and they take to drinking to afford them a temporary relief? If the history of many a sad descent like this could be fully written, it would be in language that would bring the tear to many an eye.¹ Besides ill-health, some that come from the country to the large towns are lost to the Church through neglect and want of sympathy. If each Church had an agency that would lay hold of every lonely stranger coming to the town, and at once bring him into the brotherhood of the congregation, this would lift and help to keep him up. Many a one now ranked among the lapsed might with such a help have been a respectable and respected member of the religious denomination to which he belonged.

But these, after all, are but isolated cases compared with the many born and brought up in towns that sink through drunkenness or improvidence from a condition of comparative comfort, or want of work, to the base of the social pyramid. Sad tales could be told of even educated men, who once held a high position in society, that through vice have sunk into

¹ See sad instance given in Appendix II.

the lowest depth.¹ Again, there are multitudes on the borders of this "Woeland" that from time to time are found sinking into it, whom a little temporal help, or even a little Christian sympathy, might have rescued. Some of them are now almost hopelessly sunk in vice and misery, stung to madness by the recollection of their once happier lot. This Slough of Despond soon swallows up those that sink in it. Their wail may for a time ring in our ear, but it is soon drowned amid the louder sounds of vice and misery that rise all around them.

Beneath the deep we have reached, there is one, if possible, deeper, with its mass of living beings native to the condition, nurtured amid the unhealthy physical and moral conditions of our city slums, with weakened constitutions, insatiable cravings, hopeless lives, and vice-stricken countenances. Select some of the poorest localities in one of our large towns; visit by night the crowded rooms or miserable garrets, and though much has been done within the past twenty years to improve the worst parts of these cities, you will yet come upon scenes of human wretchedness and degradation which you thought could not have existed in any civilised community, or have been tolerated by any Christian Government. Here you find a room of a few feet square, crowded with inhabitants of both sexes and of various ages;

¹ See Appendix III., in which a very melancholy instance graphically related by Dr Guthrie is given.

half of them, it may be, in rags ; no bed-clothes, but a little dirty straw spread on a hard bedstead ; not a whole article of furniture within the apartment ; the atmosphere stifling ; the dust cleaving to the floor and walls and windows ; the countenances of young and old wan and emaciated, and perhaps one or more members of the household reeling under the influence of strong drink. Or go down into the underground apartments ; it will be some time ere you can distinguish human objects amid the darkness ; and yet, in places like these into which the sun never shines and the fresh air of heaven never blows, many of the poor, through the hard pressure of poverty, are compelled to spend their dreary and monotonous existence. The rent which is charged for the merest slums, utterly unfit for human habitation, is such as should provide the tenants with comfortable homes. But the high rents that can be obtained for the better class of houses is such as the poor are unable to pay, and so they have to put up with fever-breeding hovels, where the want of fresh air and of cleanliness engenders a constant craving for stimulants, which finds its satisfaction only in strong drink. Poverty also compels the crowding together of numbers in one home of both sexes and of all ages, which leads to the most deplorable results. One instance I remember of an apartment about 8 feet by 6, in which lived a mother and her son. In that apartment was a bed which occupied three-

fourths of the room, and at night the son slept upon the bed, and the mother under it. I have said that poverty is the general cause of the lowest classes of our population being huddled into such wretched and unhealthy apartments. But it is not always so. Among those who inhabit the most wretched dwellings, there is often as much money earned as might make the inmates tolerably comfortable. One house you may find wonderfully comfortable and tidy. That is inhabited by sober industrious people, with an income that barely suffices to provide the necessaries of life. Enter at the next door the apartment of another family who are earning perhaps a great deal more. There you will find every mark of discomfort and poverty: the furniture scanty; the bed-clothes filthy; the children in rags; and all because the great part of what is earned goes for maddening drink. Large sums which are obtained in a less honest way, as by begging and stealing, go to feed the vices in which many indulge to their ruin. Follow to his home that child who with piteous whine has been begging the whole evening at the corner of the street, and you will find his parents in some wretched hovel waiting his return. If he has failed in obtaining enough to gratify their drunken appetite, he is soundly beaten, and sent forth again into the street; if he has brought home some hard-earned coppers, the parents sally forth to spend them in strong drink.

Of all the deplorable aspects of this case, there is none more sad than the condition of the children born and brought up in these physically and morally unhealthy slums.¹ If these could be taken away soon after birth and trained under conditions favourable to their future happiness and usefulness; if they could be thus early removed from the unhealthy atmosphere, the depressing surroundings, and the pernicious example and teaching of their homes, the evil would in the course of a generation or two almost cure itself. But what more sad than that, without any choice of their own, they should be subjected with their weakened constitutions to moral and physical contamination—that, long ere they have entered their teens, they should often be proficient in vice; and that they should be doomed to grow up but to perpetuate the evils from which they suffer. In the expressive words of Rev. Joseph Cook of Boston, in his Monday Lectures, Fourth Series—Lecture “On Death Traps and City Slums,” “They are brought up on the flagstones over which the most impious men and women stagger to ruin. They look out from the cradle into brothels; they hear the worst of men and women curse each other.”

Another sad aspect of the case is the poverty springing from ill-remunerated employment, which compels many a respectable family to dwell among, or in the immediate neighbourhood of, those contami-

¹ See Appendix IV.

nating dens. How many a poor widow with her young children, working day by day and into the long night at matchbox-making or bootbinding, or some other equally unremunerative employment, and scarce able with the little she makes to keep body and soul together, is forced into a wretched apartment in a bad neighbourhood, where dishealth is seldom absent from her little ones, and moral contaminations abound. Or, take the case of the single worker. How many a poor sempstress working through half of the long night, tired and lonely, is found here dying inch by inch at her daily toil, till death comes a welcome messenger to free her from her slavish toil. Wonderfully real is the picture which Hood gives of such lonely toilers in his "Song of the Shirt":—

" With fingers weary and worn,
 With eyelids heavy and red,
 A woman sat in unwomanly rags
 Plying her needle and thread.
 Stitch, stitch, stitch,
 Seam and gusset and band,
 Band and gusset and seam,
 Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
 And sew them on in a dream.

Work, work, work,
 My labour never flags ;
 And what are its wages ? A bed of straw,
 A crust of bread, and rags ;
 That shattered roof and this naked floor

A table—a broken chair,
And a wall so blank, my shadow I thank
For sometimes falling there.
Stitch, stitch, stitch,
Would that these tones could reach the rich.”

One of the saddest of the calamities that brood over these regions is the vice of prostitution. Its promoters are not by any means confined to the lowest classes of the poor, nor even to those who make no profession of the Christian name; but it is among the former class that its victims are chiefly found. The conditions of life in the habitations which have been pictured, arising from overcrowding, poverty, and intemperance, are such that many are trained from their early years to a life of shame. Missionaries, Bible-women, and others, who have sounded these depths, could tell sad tales of many a young life hurried by this vice to destruction, and of their failure by all the means at their command to restore the wanderers to the paths of virtue. Without entering further on this subject—one of the most important to which philanthropy can devote itself—I shall quote the following sentences regarding it from Dr Guthrie's publication, 'The City, its Sins and Sorrows': "Some of us are about to make a new effort for the reclamation of fallen women. As a preliminary step to this enterprise, we have procured accurate statistics of the extent of this great sin and sorrow of our large cities. Of them, I will say

nothing more than this, that, while they were read, men held down their heads with shame, or held up their hands in horror, or burst into expressions of deep indignation. . . . I do believe that, were the villany and iniquity that are working and festering here and elsewhere in every such large city laid bare before the eyes of public virtue, nothing would restrain its indignation. Men would take the law into their own hands, . . . and they would sweep our cities clean of these panderers of vice and dens of iniquity."

It is not to be forgotten that these homes of the lapsed are many of them the breeding-places of fever and of other diseases. Ill-ventilated, dirty, overcrowded, they are often charged with an atmosphere so pestilential, that no one accustomed to breathe the fresh air of heaven could remain in them for an hour. In cases of sickness, the healthy cannot be separated from the sick. All infectious diseases find here the most favourable conditions of propagation. Nor are the diseases which take their rise in these regions confined to the homes where they originate. Ever and anon they are carried to the homes of the classes above, as if it were a natural retribution for their neglect of their more unfortunate brethren.

To enter into further details here is, I hope, unnecessary. If more are wanted, they will be found in the Appendix. Enough has been stated to show that, beneath the glittering surface of our Christian civilis-

ation in our large towns, there is a seething mass of misery and irreligion. Nor are the misery and irreligion something which has relation only to the unfortunate subjects of them. Among the classes at the base of our social system, there is a large amount of class-hatred gathering and growing towards those above them in the social scale, who, living in comfort and often in luxury, never lend them a helping hand; some of whom, indeed, are growing rich out of their miseries, by grinding them down with high house-rents, while they do nothing for their physical and moral comfort; others are placing numbers of temptations within their reach in the shape of public-houses and licensed grocers' establishments which flourish on their misery; and others are taking advantage of their poverty to sell them nauseous and unhealthy food.

Need we wonder, that when these wretched creatures venture in open day to look into our fine streets and into the shops in which every article of comfort and luxury is exposed for sale, and when they behold the wealthy and the well-dressed and the happy moving to and fro, and contrast the condition of these with their own,—need we wonder that these outcasts from all the decencies and comforts of civilised life should find growing up within them a spirit of socialism, which is too readily nourished by the vile literature that sometimes finds its way to their homes—such a spirit as seems to be just now pervading the lowest

classes of all European cities; and which, maybe, is only waiting some revolutionary crisis to make itself be felt in a general upheaving of the basis of the social fabric in disorganisation, bloodshed, and ruin. How can the upper parts of that fabric be firm and stable, when the foundations are insecure? How great the danger, when a social earthquake is heaving below! "Be sure that the spirit of socialism is abroad here as elsewhere. If there are hundreds of thousands whom we fail to reach with the Gospel of Christ; if there are hundreds of thousands who are simply indifferent, there are at least tens of thousands who are being indoctrinated with the so-called gospel of the secularists and red republicans. There is not a large workshop wherein that gospel is not discussed, or where it has not its apostles. There are thousands of homes where the secularist press has taken the place of the Family Bible. You have but to know how many tons of such literature are despatched daily from the headquarters of the propaganda to measure the extent to which our manufacturing towns—in England especially—are being deluged with its teaching."—From "Home Missions," being the substance of an admirable and eloquent address delivered by Dr Macleod of Park Church, Glasgow, in moving the adoption of the Home Mission Report at Assembly 1883.

CHAPTER II.

AN INQUIRY INTO THE PRINCIPAL CAUSES OF THE PRESENT
CONDITION OF THE LAPSED POPULATION.

HERE we tread on difficult ground. In considering what affects the condition of this large class, causes and effects so merge into each other, that we are often in danger of confounding the two. We investigate some cause of spiritual destitution, or of the miserable physical and moral condition of many of the Churchless, and discover that which is a cause in some cases to be an effect in others. Or, we find some evident cause to be but one of a chain, linking together two or more intimately bearing on each other. I shall, therefore, while pointing out some of the most evident causes of the present condition of things, consider wherein these causes often become effects resulting from some other causes tending to the deterioration of the classes referred to.

No one who has any acquaintance with this class of our population can have any difficulty in assigning *intemperance* as one of the main causes of the poverty, misery, and degradation of our outcast

populations.¹ An experienced visitor can almost at a glance, on entering a room in the poorer districts of a town, discern whether one or more of its inmates is the victim of intoxication. If he sees disorder, dirt, scanty and broken furniture, an air of utter discomfort, he can almost be sure that the cause of such wretchedness is to be traced to intemperance. In visiting these slums of our large cities, and becoming acquainted with the condition of the homes and their inmates, one is amazed at the traces of intemperance he finds on every side. Were it possible to abolish every public-house, that with its open door is a source of constant temptation to the Churchless poor, and shut up every other means of access to ardent spirits and other intoxicating drinks, it may be safely affirmed that three-fourths of the misery and crime of these abodes would disappear; health and happiness would hold their beneficent sway where fever and misery now brood: every Christian agency employed for their amelioration would have tenfold more success; the desolate places now darkened by the shadow of irreligion and despair would be lighted up with the sunshine of comfort and love and joy. It has been already stated what numbers of once happy, respectable, and well-to-do families sink through the power of intemperance into this Woeland, from which, unless by almost superhuman efforts of Christian benevolence,

¹ See Appendix V.

they are never destined to rise. But for intemperance, there would be very few accessions to the class of the lapsed; and many of those already down could be easily raised. It is the great barrier to the success of evangelical effort; it is a moral disease which with the drunkard's surroundings can hardly be cured; it is a vice which is continually fed by the temptations which the apathy of the public has placed in the poor man's way.

But on the other hand, intemperance is not only a cause of much of the misery of the Churchless and poor; it is also an effect springing from many circumstances in their external condition. A family driven through long sickness or other misfortune to live in some poor locality, and to occupy, from inability to pay rent, a small and uncomfortable apartment into which are crowded all the members of the household, and in which impure air and depressing outward circumstances dull the spirits and excite a craving for stimulants—that family has a strong temptation to indulge in intoxicating drink. When the head of the house can find no comfort in his home—when everything about him reminds him of his present misery, in contrast, it may be, with the happy circumstances of his former lot—when he finds just at his very door a public-house with flaring lights in the windows and clean passages and luxuriantly furnished rooms where he may lounge and drink and “remember his misery no

more," is it any wonder that he should be tempted again and again within that fatal trap, till the habit of drinking is established, and he thinks only of pandering to his fatal vice? Or, is it any less wonder that his poor wife, deprived night after night of her husband's society, scarce able to obtain from him at the week's end as large a pittance of his wages as will keep herself and her children alive, should in despair take to the bottle, and pawn article after article for that drink which makes her happy for a time and relieves her from the agony of perpetual despair? How many among those that regard those poor miserable sinners with cold pity, and like the Priest and the Levite with the wounded Jew, pass them by on the other side; how many that themselves enjoy the pure air of heaven and every comfort that wealth and society can afford, would, if reduced to the circumstances of thousands of the labouring poor, escape the temptations that are spread so thickly in their path? It is easy to turn up the whites of one's eyes and talk with horror of the state of society at the base of the social fabric; and, looking at their vicious countenances and tattered garments, to thank God we are not like these: but why has God made you, my reader, to differ from them? Why has He given you all the comforts of home—your easy-chair to recline in when weary; your happy family to relieve your weariness with their smiles; your glass of wine

to cheer your heart; your healthy business to brace your mind and give the required excitement to your spirits; and your fellow-man, perhaps in the next back street, to lead a life of wretchedness and despair—to face temptations which he cannot possibly resist, and to spend a wasted and miserable existence? Why, but that you may have the privilege of ministering to his wants—of helping to raise him out of the mire—of extending to him the hand of Christian sympathy and love.

Again, *overcrowding* is another of the special causes from which much of the misery and the vice of the lapsed populations spring. But while it is a cause, it is also, like intemperance, an effect, which results from the poverty of the inmates and the high rents they have to pay for their wretched homes. No one would live in an unhealthy crowded apartment who could do otherwise. No one would consent to pay a high rent for a habitation unfit for a pig, that, for an equal or smaller rent, could obtain a decent home. But what makes property of this kind so profitable is, that it can be bought at a cheap rate, as few care to make profits from such a source, and that high rents can be obtained by its subdivision into small apartments in which those who cannot afford better are forced to live. Here, we have in these overcrowded habitations the origin and cause of much of the wretchedness and degradation that exist among the poorest of the poor. A

single family is unable to maintain itself and pay the high rent at which these hovels are let, and so they take in one or more lodgers to eke out their scanty living. When, as generally happens, there is but one room for all—for father and mother, children of different ages of both sexes, and for the grown-up lodgers—when from six to twelve are crowded into a small apartment in which not more than a couple could comfortably live, it needs no great stretch of imagination to conceive the fearful evils that must flow from the arrangement. The crowding of a number of persons into a low ill-ventilated apartment must have a depressing influence on the health and spirits, must create a craving for stimulants and tend to the degradation of the moral character. Children brought up under these influences cannot be either physically or morally healthy. It is impossible that the decencies of life can be observed. Hardening and degrading influences are at work on the children from the very time of their entrance into the world. It must not be supposed that this overcrowding, with its attendant evils, is, in the lowest and most destitute localities, an exceptional thing. All who have sounded the depths of these slums have but one tale to tell of its frequency and desolating effects.¹ Resulting itself from poverty, overcrowding has a constant tendency to perpetuate it. It weakens the physi-

¹ See for instances and effects of this, Appendix VI.

cal and degrades the moral constitution. It paralyses the energies of the grown-up men and women in the household. It breeds fever and other diseases, and in many cases, lays the foundation of evils too awful to mention. Girls brought up under such influences are often found entering at an early age on a life of shame. Parents under its influence have been known to become so degraded as to encourage their children in prostitution for the sake of the gain it brings. It is impossible to contemplate the evils that flow from overcrowding without a shudder.

Another cause of the poverty and misery of the lowest classes in our towns' populations is *want of remunerative work*.¹ Though there are many that but for their vicious and degraded habits might obtain regular and well-paid work, there are multitudes of others, especially widows with young families, and single women, that can hardly obtain any work at all, or only such as by incessant and killing labour is hardly enough to keep body and soul together. It is a sad reflection on our Christian civilisation, that, while the thousands and tens of thousands of the upper and middle classes are enjoying their comforts and their luxuries with only healthy labour, or with such gentle exercise of mind and body as promotes their comfort and happiness, there are many in these destitute localities ground down to the dust by unremunerative labour, pining

¹ See Appendix VII.

out their short lives in daily slavery and pain. Much there may be in some of these wretched abodes to shock the senses and repel the delicate sensibilities of refined men and women, but there is surely also much to excite the deepest Christian sympathies, and call forth the active benevolence, of the Christian public. The history of one such poor family struggling hard against the inroads of poverty, wasting their strength in almost superhuman efforts to keep the wolf from the door—of their sighs and groans—of the dying off of the weaker, till, it may be, only one or two of the workers are left, weary and heart-broken, and sighing for the rest of the grave,—this might well bring tears from the hardest heart and melt the most avaricious into pity.

A farther cause of the misery of this class—one of the many demons that prey upon them—is *the adulterated and unhealthy provisions their poverty forces them to purchase*. While their poverty causes them to submit to many degrading employments to make a living, it compels them also to partake of much food that is innutritious and nauseous. When at any time they are able to obtain something better and more nourishing than usual, their ignorance of cooking prevents their obtaining the proper nourishment from it. It is easy to descant on the wastefulness of many of the poor, but that is often more their misfortune than their fault. Their incomes are often

uncertain ; they have seldom or never the prospect of laying aside a portion of their earnings for old age. What they make by their grinding labour is immediately spent ; and it is easy to see how, even with the best intentions, their scanty pittance which has to be applied to many uses, fails to be applied in the most economical way. No doubt, simple, pure, and nourishing food could often be provided at smaller expense, but the bodily system that has been drugged with impure air, and taxed to the utmost by grinding labour, craves for something that is tasty and stimulating, which is hastily devoured in an ill-cooked state. But, as a rule, it is only the worst of the higher-class provisions that can ever reach the poor at the price they can afford to pay—that which from its unwholesomeness or adulteration the classes above them disdain. Unhealthy and ill-cooked food is, under present conditions, at once a necessity and a curse for the poor—a necessity springing from their poverty, and a curse because, in combination with other causes already mentioned, it weakens the bodily and injures the spiritual constitution.

The *pawnshop* may here be noticed as one of the demons preying upon the poor, and a powerful cause of the misery they suffer. Whatever its uses may be (and it is not here denied that, under a well-regulated system, it may be attended with some advantage to certain classes of the poor), its abuse is to many

of them a cause of misery and ruin. To the vicious and the improvident, it is a constant source of temptation. These are well aware that for any decent article of clothing or furniture, they can raise through the pawnshop a certain amount of money to relieve present necessities; and the practice once established of taking goods to be pledged, a rush is made at every household pinch, till often everything of the slightest value is landed in this omnivorous deposit. Not only the struggling family bowed down with affliction, but the drunken father or mother also, find in these the means of raising money; and as long as a penny can be raised, everything is carried away to pawn till scarce anything but the bare walls is left. Many a sad story could be told of one member of the household, in the other's absence, robbing the house of everything valuable, carrying it to the pawnshop, and spending the proceeds on maddening drink. An industrious father returns home on Saturday night to find his Sunday's coat or his Family Bible pledged for money to purchase drink, and his wife and the mother of his children reeling on the floor. Or the poor housewife, toiling day by day to keep her house clean and her children tidy, has gone out on some necessary errand to find on her return that her drunken husband has been there and carried off to pledge for drink some marriage gift which she had hoped to retain as an heirloom in the family, and she

almost breaks her heart over the loss. But for the existence of this source of temptation, there would be far less lapsing from church attendance and far more thrift among the poor. The following graphic account of the evils of the pawnshop from the personal observation of a town's minister appeared in one of the early numbers of the parish magazine 'Life and Work': "The evils of the pawnshop are not merely pictorial. Its degrading influence can be formulated, distinctly stated, and easily understood. It tempts the poor to anticipate income; and if borrowing in any sense dulls the edge of industry, to borrow on the capital of future labour takes the spring of hope out of industrial effort. It is a means of powerful support to the public-house. But for the pawnshop, there would be a deal of enforced abstinence among the poor; and though this is not a distinguished virtue, it is vastly better than the indulgence to which the institution directly ministers. . . . It takes away from life the restraining influence of healthy shame. It is with a fluttering heart and downcast look that any one enters a pawnshop for the first time. But the first blush is always the deepest, and a few visits remove it altogether, and leave life without one of its strongest guards. It tempts the idle to steal, and the criminal to acts of violence, in its ready market for all kinds of plunder. It defeats the minister of the Gospel in his efforts to

bring the poor, with their limited knowledge and weak wills, under the gospel of light and life and self-denial.”¹

¹ For an excellent account of the evils of the pawnshop, see article entitled, “The Poor Man’s Banker,” by John Hollingshead, in ‘Good Words’ for 1864, p. 179 ; as also, for the other side of the question, the statement of a committee of pawnbrokers at p. 359, with Mr Hollingshead’s reply to the same.

CHAPTER III.

REMEDIAL MEASURES. SECULAR—(a) BY THE STATE.

THE remarks already made on the condition of the lapsed and the causes of that condition will be sufficient, it is hoped, to show the existence among the classes at the base of the social pyramid of a wretchedness and irreligion which may make us ashamed of our selfishness, and of a growing spirit of revolution which, if not soon checked, may well make us tremble for the future of our country. The state of matters existing side by side with our high civilisation is indeed deplorable, but does it admit of no remedy? To doubt this would make us despair of the grace of God and of the power of the Gospel. Are Christian Churches, is a Christian State, appalled at the evils and dangers, to settle on their lees, and attempt to do nothing because they cannot all at once do everything? Not so men act when they see a noble vessel stranded on some rock near the shore, and hear the wild wail of the crew and passengers for help. The lifeboat may not be able to take off all

the passengers ere the ship break up, but it is instantly manned by a daring crew, who, at the risk of their lives, push out into the boiling waves, and by almost superhuman efforts save a few from a watery grave. They would have gladly saved all, but, in default of that, they rejoice that they have been able to save some. So the case of the Churchless and poor is too urgent, time is too precious for our waiting and planning till some great and comprehensive scheme can be carried out which shall bring the whole outcast population within its scope. Meanwhile, through the apathy of those on whom primarily devolves the duty of coming to their help, the wail of agony from thousands of our fellow-creatures continues to resound through those desolate regions; multitudes, whose life might have been made a blessing to themselves and to the State, are wearing out a useless and wretched earthly existence; children are brought into the world only in large numbers to be swept off by neglect or disease, or, if they grow up, to become like their parents vicious and degraded; and the reproach against our Christian civilisation is still gathering in force. We need not despair of a future and full solution of this great problem, but until it is taken up in earnest by the Churches and by politicians earnest about their country's good; until it is made a battle-cry at parliamentary elections, and the subject of constant discussion in our Church Courts; until, in a word, the conscience of

the country is fully roused, no drastic remediable measures are likely to be applied.

In seeking for a solution or solutions of this problem, we must take into account man's complex condition and relations, both material and spiritual. We find in all human experience that man's material and spiritual natures act and react on each other, and that no real improvement in his condition is possible without taking both the one and the other fully into consideration. We have already found that various causes, some more, and others less, important, conduce to the poverty, misery, and degradation of the out-cast populations. And as the causes are manifold, so must be the remedies. There are, it is true, two or three great remedial measures that must be applied, ere anything like a full solution of the problem can be obtained; but, under each of these, there are several of a subordinate character, all having the same aim, and which may work together towards the same result.

Experience teaches, that in a great many cases physical causes are a great hindrance to the operation of spiritual remedies, and that, before spiritual agencies can have due effect, these physical hindrances must be taken out of the way. How little, for instance, can the offer of the Gospel benefit a starving man till you can first satisfy his hunger! How can you expect the gaunt mother, clad in rags and occupying a wretched home, to listen to your spiritual

counsels with any real profit, till you have first relieved the awful pressure of worldly work or carking care that is weighing her soul to the dust? Or how can you expect religion to flourish in a home that is crowded with human beings, covered with filth, and contaminated by bad air? The Great Physician, we know, ministered often to temporal wants as an opening to the healing of the soul. Hence, before spiritual agencies can have their due weight in raising those fallen multitudes, certain hindrances to their due efficacy must be removed. The Word of God, if it is to effect a great change among such, must have "free course"; devoted men and women, going with the Word of Life to these perishing outcasts, must not have to fight the demons of filth and overcrowding, and public-house temptations in addition to the ordinary obstacles which the natural heart presents to the truth. We must, therefore, look to the State, as embodied in the Government of the day, to do its duty by these outcast populations. It must not be allowed to forget that the compact between it and the Church implies not only certain advantages to each, but reciprocal duties to be performed. The Church established, for the reasons given in the Introduction, has failed in bringing in the great majority of the outcast poor within her fold; but has not the State equally failed in its duty to these? Though the Church is by far the cheapest agent of reformation, and

though, as was borne witness to by a committee of the House of Commons in 1834, "no institution in their belief ever existed which, at so little cost, has accomplished so much good," yet the State has neither supplied the Church with the means of overtaking the work of evangelising the lapsed, nor fully removed those hindrances which make her full success possible. Of political reforms we have heard abundance; the rights of the upper and middle classes have been respected and their peculiar temptations taken out of the way; but why has a paternal Government so long allowed such a state of things at the base of society as we have faintly described to exist? Why has it allowed so much misery and vice to fester among the poorest and most helpless of its subjects without lending them a helping hand? Why has it allowed thousands and tens of thousands to be subject to physical conditions which make comfort and good citizenship impossible, punished them for breaking the law, and multiplied the temptations that bring about their punishment;¹ and permitted, without some great remedial measures, a spirit of socialism to exist and gather force among the lowest of these abject populations? Still worse, what shall we say of a Christian Government that for generations has been con-

¹ In the words of Dr Guthrie, 'Plea for Ragged Schools,' "It has left them to be tempted to crime, and then punished them for its commission."

tent to draw a large part of its revenue from the vices of the people, without any earnest attempt to remove the temptations to those vices? It has been gratifying to know how, once and again, the State has interfered to protect those above this class in social rank who, from their position or circumstances, were unable to protect themselves. Beneficent laws have been passed for the protection of females and children in manufactories, of miners in mines, and of our hardy seamen at sea. And when it was found that gambling and lotteries were doing injury to the upper and middle classes, they were put down. But there are in our large towns and mining and manufacturing villages thousands of human beings equally, if not more, helpless to protect themselves—fathers, the victims of strong drink, to which innumerable temptations are allowed to remain; mothers struggling with poverty and dying ere their prime; little children born into the world with no chance in life—all left to perish or fight the demons that oppress them as best they may. Yet how little has been done by Government to remove the temptations and miseries of the poor. If cruelty is exercised towards the beasts of burden, it punishes the perpetrators thereof; but thousands of human abodes are allowed to accumulate filth and breed fever, to become dens of vice and misery, and yet, year after year, the law allows this state of things to go on without interference. The public-houses, the low

· tippling-shops, the licensed grocers' establishments in the poorest localities, are killing off their victims year by year, inflicting ruin and misery on many homes, bringing pauperism, irreligion, and untimely deaths, into those fever dens.¹

In making these charges, I am not ignorant of the benevolent attempt to remedy some of the evils of our overcrowded localities, by the Artisans' Dwellings Act, originated and carried through by one of the most high-minded of our statesmen, nor of the amendments to said Act which experience has suggested to adapt it better to the purpose in view; nor of several other Acts, some of them local, intended to serve a similar purpose.² So far as respects the class above the most degraded in our large towns, this Act has been an almost unmixed blessing wherever it has been introduced. It applies to large areas that may be certified as unhealthy, and requires that the buildings shall be taken down and replaced by others to contain as many inhabitants as the old. These new houses, however, are suited to, and likely to be occupied by, a better class of the population than those that vacated the old. These last must find new homes as best they may, and thus often overcrowd the hovels that are left. "It is notorious," says the writer of that intensely graphic paper, 'The Bitter Cry of Outcast London,' "that the

¹ See Appendix V.

² See Appendix VIII.

Artisans' Dwellings Act has, in some respects, made matters worse for them. Large spaces have been cleared of fever-breeding rookeries to make way for the building of decent habitations, but the rents of these are far beyond the means of the abject poor. They are driven to crowd more closely together in the few stifling places still left to them; and so Dives makes a greater harvest out of their misery, buying up property condemned as unfit for human habitation, and turning it into a gold-mine because the poor must have shelter somewhere, even though it be the shelter of a living tomb." Again, though the larger areas of the slums may be cleared out by the operation of this Act, there are in all our large towns smaller areas scattered here and there, often amid the habitations of a better-class population, to which the Act would not extend.

But has not the Education Act, by which each child of even the very poorest must be educated, shown the interest of the State in the wellbeing of the lapsed populations? If the moral sense is equally trained with the intellect, and the educated have the opportunity of turning their acquirements to good account, then education is a great blessing. But it is a mistake to think that education, however universal among the young, will remedy all the evils that have been here pointed out. No doubt, it will help somewhat. In some cases, it will be a stimulus to the young to raise themselves out of the mire, and

to bear themselves respectably in the world. But in a good many cases, unless some means are taken to preserve the young so educated from the contamination of their homes and surroundings, it will but intensify the evil it is intended to cure. To train their intellects, and then relegate them to their old haunts, with all the temptations that surround them, is often but to make them greater adepts in crime. Then, think what, to these poor children, must be the effect of our wretched religious differences which have eliminated all positive religious teaching from the ordinary work of the school, and relegated it to an hour or half-hour before the ordinary school-work of each day. To those who enjoy the blessing of positive religious instruction at home, it may not matter so much; but what to these poor waifs can be the meaning of a half-hour's separate religious instruction when they come to obtain it, but that religion is some unnatural excrescence which in their ordinary work they are meant to avoid? Some hopeful results may be expected from the universal education of the children of the poorest classes, but as to the dream of some educational enthusiasts that it will prove a panacea for the evils that affect that class, I fear it will be found a complete delusion. "As for the dream," says Hugh Miller, in speaking of the effects of education, "that there is to be some extraordinary elevation of the general platform of the human race, it is simply the hallucination of the

age—the world's present alchemical expedient for converting farthings into guineas simply by dint of scouring." In fact, to a certain extent, the compulsory education of these waifs, instead of remedying the evils with which the lapsed classes have to contend, only intensifies them. Many a poor family working together from morning till night were able among them to make such a living as kept them from utter want.¹ The deft little fingers of the children helped to swell the common store, and to provide them with clothing and bread. But now, several of the bread-winners are taken away to school, and the pressure on the remainder becomes all the more severe. And not only so, those who go to school must have better clothing than their former rags, and pay the weekly amount of school-fees; and so, with the same number of mouths to feed, and better clothing to procure for her children, and, in many cases also, school-fees to pay, while the common means of obtaining a livelihood are diminished, there is often such a strain on the poor mother as brings her to an early grave. If the State insists on the education of these children, as doubtless it ought, there ought in some way or another to be provided the means of clothing and feeding them, as long as they are receiving education, and then the State ought to see that their education can be turned to profitable account.

Wherein, farther, may the State fulfil its duty to

¹ See Appendix VII.

the unfortunate class of the lapsed and poor? These are often, as has been already pointed out, the victims of a want of duty on the part of the owners of the tenements they inhabit. The rents charged for the very poorest rooms are such as ought to provide the poor with decent homes. As regards the charging of high rents for these tenements, it may be argued that, like other property, the rental must depend on the relations of supply and demand. Were the demand for this class of habitations not so great, the rents would naturally be less. Has not every man, it may be asked, a right to take for his property what he can get? Yes. But property has its duties as well as its rights. No proprietor of these dwellings, receiving for them a larger percentage of rent on the original cost than any other kind of property, has a right, under these circumstances, to let for human dwellings hovels often worse than pigsties. For the rent he charges, he is bound to give fair value, and to see that the rooms he lets are put and kept in such a condition as not to be injurious to the physical and moral constitution of the inmates. Whosoever lets such hovels to human tenants is morally, and ought to be made civilly, responsible for the consequences. It would be unwise on the part of any Government to interfere with the economic relations of supply and demand in such a way as to regulate the rents that are to be paid for these tenements; but, by the institution of suitable inspection, and by the stricter enforcement

of the sanitary laws already in existence, the State could see that all the apartments for which rents are charged are fit for human habitation—that the house proprietors do their duty to their tenants, as well as that the tenants do theirs, in keeping their houses ordinarily clean. The State can see that every house or room that is let for human habitation has access to the pure air and light of heaven; and can prevent the letting of those that are wanting in the elements of health. Or, when a house becomes unhealthy or ruinous—not merely blocks of buildings, but single houses—so as to be no longer fit for human habitation, the State can order it to be shut up and rebuilt at the owner's expense, or sold at its real value to those willing to rebuild. We have inspectors of mines and railways, and other concerns that may endanger public safety. Why should we not have Government inspectors to watch over these habitations and prevent them from becoming injurious to the moral and physical health of the inhabitants, and a danger to the State?

But it may be said, What is the use of making these rooms comfortable and clean for the inmates, when after a few weeks, perhaps, every pane in the windows will be broken, and the walls and floors covered with filth? But why is this so, but just that the inmates know they can treat their abodes as they please with impunity provided they pay the rent? But a law that dealt even-handed with pro-

prietor and tenant, that made both alike responsible for the preservation and cleanliness of the homes, would do much for the material and moral reformation of the inmates. If their abodes were kept as clean as they might—if each of them was accessible to the pure air of heaven, and no overcrowding was permitted to vitiate the air and contaminate the morals of the inmates—a great step would be taken in the elevation of the poor. The State has surely a right to see that the habitations of the people are not kept as fever-dens, or as places of moral contamination to breed disease and vice in many a neighbourhood.

Again, we have seen that one of the chief causes, if not the very chief, of the degradation of the lapsed in our large towns is the vice of intemperance. Much of this arises from the craving for stimulants excited by the confined air and filthy condition of many of their homes, joined to the extraordinary facilities which are put in their way for gratifying that craving by intoxicating drink. Select the most wretched areas of our large towns, and you will find as a rule that the more wretched the tenements, the larger is the number of licensed houses for the sale of ardent spirits. All these are thriving on the vices of the poor—a constant source of temptation to the working man. Now, why has the State, which is supposed to have a paternal interest in the welfare of its subjects, allowed such a multiplication of those sources of pauperism, misery, and crime, to the working man?

Why, but that these houses, or rather the drink consumed in them, yield a large revenue to the Crown? But this is a policy which can be justified on the ground neither of justice, economy, nor of the well-being of the body politic. The policy which draws a large revenue out of the vices of the people cannot be a healthy one. That policy which draws large sums from the earnings of the spendthrift working man to spend it on officers to keep him in order and on prisons to confine him, cannot in the long-run be a profitable one. How severe a rebuke to a Christian State like ours was the noble reply of the Emperor of China to those who were attempting to introduce foreign opium into his country!—"I will never consent to raise my revenue out of the ruin and vices of my people." At the door of the State lies much of the guilt of allowing that awful condition of the sunken population which I have faintly attempted to describe. Reduce the number of the public-houses by at least 75 per cent; withdraw from the grocers in these localities their whisky licences, giving such compensation as may be deemed reasonable; make the publican, as suggested by Dr Guthrie,¹ on whose premises it has been proved the head of the family has got the drink, responsible for the consequences that flowed from his intoxication to himself and his family; make it the publican's interest to keep his customers sober, instead of often, as now, to drug them with intoxicating

¹ See Appendix IX.

drinks, and we should have thousands of happy homes where vice and misery and death now reign.

But how shall the Government be compensated for the loss of so large an income drawn from the vices of the poor? Remove, it is answered, the temptations to drunkenness from the labouring poor; encourage them to thrift and sobriety, and they will, by sober industry and increased wages, be able to purchase more taxable commodities of a useful sort; and, by living peaceably and honestly, save the State a large expenditure on police and criminal prosecutions. But for this horrid vice, pauperism and crime would be reduced to their narrowest limits; comfort and contentment would take the place of misery and treason. If, as statistics clearly prove,¹ intemperance is responsible for the greatest part of the thieving, quarrelling, wife-beating, and murders which bulk so largely in our police reports, then, remove the temptations to it, make it difficult, almost impossible, for the working man to become its victim, and the resources of the country will multiply, the expenditure on criminal establishments and for lunacy and pauperism will sensibly diminish; and in course of time the Government revenue, drawn not from the vices but from the sober industry of the people, will sensibly increase. "Oh," but we are told, "an attempt by the State to put down drunkenness to that extent would be an unwarrantable interference with the

¹ See Appendix V.

liberty of the subject! Why should not the poorest of the working men have the same right to indulge their appetite as the upper classes have without restraint? Why deny to the one that which you freely give to the other?" Most abuses which require to be put down with a strong hand are attempted to be propped up by such arguments as these. But the question comes to be, Is the indulgence in intoxicating drinks a necessity to the working man, or is it not? Does it on the whole do him more good or harm? Has he the same power of self-protection, the same amount of self-restraint, as those high above him in the scale of life? To those who consider the matter dispassionately—to those who are acquainted with the effects produced by drunkenness in the slums and fever-dens of our large towns, these questions will be easily answered. Those who are placed in the higher ranks of life have far fewer temptations to intoxicating drink, and far less chance, even when overcome by temptation, of ruining themselves and their families by drink. With pure air, plenty of home comforts, abundant means of amusement and self-culture, they have not the same craving after stimulants, nor the same want of self-restraint, as the man who breathes the vitiated air of a confined apartment, who has no comforts and no enjoyments at home, and finds, as he returns home with his wages on Saturday night, a source of temptation in many a public-house by the way to lead him to ruin. For

the well-to-do man to spend a few shillings, or even pounds, in drink may not imply any diminution of his own comforts or those of his family; but for the hard-working man to spend as much in self-indulgence implies poverty, misery, perhaps ruin, to himself and his household. The better classes can take care of themselves; the very poorest cannot. What is liberty, if it is only liberty to go to ruin? What evil is there in withdrawing the sources of temptation from the working man, if, while it does not take away from him any real pleasure or hinder in any way his advancement in life, it only deprives him of that which is fatal to his worldly prosperity, comfort, and peace? Never was anything more out of place than the sneer about making people sober by Act of Parliament. No Act of Parliament will of itself make people sober, any more than it will make them honest or industrious; but it can do much, very much, in taking away hindrances and temptations, or in punishing those who cast temptations in others' way. Along with positive agencies, which can act on the human will and train to industry and self-respect, Acts of Parliament can do much in training a virtuous, sober, and law-obeying people. This temperance question, viewed in its relation to the wellbeing of the State, and to the reforming powers of the State, is one of the most important with which any Government can deal; and that Government which, trusting to the natural expansiveness of

a healthy fiscal system, and fearless of the influence of vested interests in the sale of that which is spreading havoc and ruin among the people, shall legislate for the securing the greatest amount of temperance, especially in the districts where the population is most densely crowded, will descend to posterity as the most beneficent of this generation.

By the removal of these two great hindrances to the work of the Churches among the outcast poor, the State will have done much to help in the solution of the problem of their complete amelioration. But, in addition to the preventive agencies above referred to, it is worthy of consideration how far it might go in the way of providing or encouraging positive means for helping in the cure of the physical evils that oppress the poor. For instance, encouragement might be given to Ragged, as distinct from Industrial Schools, by restoring the capitation grant withdrawn in 1859.¹ Although Industrial Feeding-schools have now taken the place of Original Ragged Schools, first instituted by the late Sheriff Watson in Aberdeen, and established in Edinburgh after his model by the late Drs Guthrie and Robertson of New Greyfriars', Edinburgh, yet the latter were calculated to serve an excellent purpose in the elevation of the lowest grades of society which the former do not. Being entirely voluntary associations, they are managed by active philanthropists whose whole aim

¹ See Appendix X.

is to rescue the young from a life of crime, give to them an education both religious, intellectual, and industrial, apart from the contaminating influences of their early homes, and to set them out in the world with every chance in life. Instead of being, like certified Industrial Schools, the receptacle for children who have been before the magistrate for begging, or charged with minor offences, or unmanageable by their parents, these Ragged Schools are intended to lay hold of children at an early age, and save them from begging, thieving, and the degradation of a sentence by the magistrate. In contrast with the training of the Board Schools, from which the youthful waifs are permitted to return night after night to all the evil influences of their wretched homes, they are here boarded, fed, trained in some useful industrial art by men entirely devoted to their interests, and, instead of returning on the completion of their education to their old neighbourhood, where they run so many risks of moral contamination, they are introduced into respectable situations and watched over by those who have a deep interest in their after-success. Industrial Schools, established under the Industrial Schools Act of 1866, though serving an excellent purpose in the training of vagrant or criminal young children, can never answer the same purpose in the reformation of the lapsed as the Original Ragged Schools. These, if existing in sufficient numbers and possessing sufficient funds, would

be capable of giving a good account of every child born in a home of poverty or vice, and of making them a blessing instead of a curse to society. Those who have read the reports of the great Ragged School Union of London, of which Lord Shaftesbury has been for so many years the president, and of Dr Barnardo's Homes for Destitute Children, will see what an agency for good these Ragged Schools may become under prudent and Christian management.

Farther, if it is not provided for, as it does not seem to be, in the Public Works Loan Act or amendments thereof, might not Government encouragement be given to such counteractive agencies, established in towns by municipal authorities, as would help to elevate and instruct the poor, and keep them from temptations to self-indulgence? Many of these have been established by private enterprise and are doing a good work in helping to raise the poor; but if Government encouragement were given for the building and furnishing of halls and coffee-houses to help the grown-up men and women of the wynds and closes, as it is given for the building and furnishing of schools to educate the young, much good would result.

Most of those counteractive agencies which stand in need of Government pecuniary help would soon be made to pay, not only indirectly in the improved habits of the sunken and Churchless populations, but in return of good interest for the outlay. But even

if not, why should money be grudged from the national exchequer to make war on the intemperance, crime, and ungodliness of the land, when millions are spent without a grumble in the wars which man makes upon his fellow-men, carrying desolation and misery in their train?

Some action might be taken by Government to relieve the overcrowding by the encouragement of emigration. Reference has been made to this by the author in another publication.¹ In many of our colonies there are large tracts of land lying waste for want of people to cultivate them; and in our large towns there are thousands of lives not only wasted in idleness, but burdensome and ruinous to the country. A twofold agency—one branch at home for selecting and sending out gratis the most suitable of the overcrowded population; the other abroad, for receiving, training the emigrants, and providing them with work—might at length give happiness and means of honourable livelihood to many now living in misery and crime.

The preliminary to proper State action for the relief of the sunken populations is a Government Commission of inquiry.² This cannot be much longer delayed if the blot and stain on our Christian civilisa-

¹ See *Life Work of the Church of Scotland*, p. 63. Messrs Blackwood & Sons: 1871.

² Since the above was written, a Government Commission on the homes of the poor has been appointed on the motion of the Marquis of Salisbury, but for England only.

tion is to be removed. Other portions of the community that suffer under any great and long-continued grievance have ways and means of directing the attention of the State to their wrongs. They form powerful associations, and at public meetings, through the press, and at Parliamentary elections, compel at length the Government of the day to come to their relief. But the class at the bottom of the social pyramid have no such means of causing the State to listen to their sufferings and wrongs. There is no spirit of union among them which would bring them together for such an end. They have not the intelligence or education to enable them to harangue at public meetings; and they are ashamed to appear before respectable society in their rags. Had they possessed the power, as they have the will, they would long ere now have compelled Government to listen to their wrongs. "I am persuaded," says Dr Barnardo in 'Night and Day,' December 1883, "the State must and will interfere. England can no longer tolerate such hotbeds of dangerous passions, such seed-plots of revolution and disorder, to remain among her crowded populations. Her own safety demands their removal before the welfare of the State is hopelessly imperilled. Nor can civilised humanity in broadcloth be any longer content to stand by unconcerned while brothers and sisters are perishing (I cannot call it living) under the most loathsome conditions, and while harpies in the dis-

guise of respectable citizens fatten upon rents demanded for hovels unfit for habitations, and which yield owners from 15 to 40 per cent on the original outlay." Why, I ask, then, should not Parliament at once grapple with the problem, and do its part in removing the plague-spot from the country? National prosperity is but an illusion, so long as there are such festering sores eating as a canker into the heart of the social system.

CHAPTER IV.

REMEDIAL MEASURES. SECULAR—(b) BY ASSOCIATIONS AND PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS, AND BY THE POOR THEMSELVES.

THE State, if it grapples firmly with the subject, may do much in removing the hindrances to the operation of the Gospel, but cannot do all. Much may also be done for the same end by private associations, or even by individuals, interested in the welfare of the poor. So far as regards the removal of the great areas of unhealthy habitations which have become a nuisance to the neighbourhood, the State has so far done its part in the passing of the Artisans' Dwellings Act. But the application of this Act depends on complaints made by the sanitary medical officer, or two justices, or twelve ratepayers; and as already stated, there are in all large towns here and there small areas of such unhealthy buildings, which this Act does not seem to take cognisance of, or which are not likely to be brought under the notice of the municipal authorities by complainants. Not a little, however, may be done, and has been done on a smaller scale, by *private associations, and even by private individuals,*

before this Act has been called into force, or even where it has already operated. Starting from the principle that property of this kind, even with all the necessary outlay upon it to make the inhabitants comfortable, may be made ordinarily remunerative, associations have been formed for purchasing it whenever it could be obtained. Then, under the care of those interested in the wellbeing of the poor, that property has been renovated and let under conditions which prevent overcrowding, and secure cleanliness and health; and the tenants by judicious management have been made to co-operate with the owners in keeping their tenements clean and comfortable—a certain yearly or monthly sum being laid aside from the rents to expend on such improvements as the tenants most desire. Here is a means of not only securing the co-operation of the tenants in the gradual improvement of their homes, but also of maintaining in them a spirit of independence, better than any written law can effect. The character of the inmates rises with the improvement of their homes—the one acting and reacting on the other. Those who would see how a great social and moral improvement may be made on the inhabitants of these tenements by private enterprise, and that too chiefly by the personal instrumentality of a benevolent lady, should read, ‘Homes of the London Poor,’ by Octavia Hill—Macmillan & Co., 1883—a work of deep practical interest, drawn from experience in the application of the principle

to which reference has been made. The following sentences are quoted from the second chapter as a specimen of the work, and a record of the success of the experiment :—

“I feel most deeply,” she says, “that the disciplining of our immense poor population must be effected by individual influence ; and that this power can change it from a mob of paupers and semi-paupers into a body of self-dependent workers. It is my opinion, further, that although such influence may be brought to bear upon them in various ways, it may be exercised in a very remarkable manner by persons undertaking the oversight and management of such houses as the poor habitually lodge in. In support of this opinion, I subjoin an account of what has been actually achieved in two very poor courts in London. About four years ago, I was put in possession of three houses in one of the worst courts in Marylebone. Six other houses were bought subsequently. All were crowded with inmates. The first thing to be done was to put them in decent tenable order. The set last purchased was a row of cottages facing a bit of desolate ground, occupied with wretched, dilapidated cow-sheds, manure-heaps, old timber, and rubbish of every description. The houses were in a most deplorable condition ; the plaster was dropping from the walls ; on one staircase, a pail was placed to catch the rain that fell through the roof. All the staircases were perfectly dark ; the bannisters were

gone, having been burned as firewood by tenants. The grates, with large holes in them, were falling forward into the rooms. The wash-house, full of lumber belonging to the landlord, was locked up; thus the inhabitants had to wash clothes, as well as to cook, eat, and sleep, in their small rooms. The dust-bin, standing in the front of the houses, was accessible to the whole neighbourhood, and boys often dragged from it quantities of unseemly objects and spread them over the court. The state of the drainage was in keeping with everything else. The pavement of the backyard was all broken up, and great puddles stood in it, so that the damp crept up the outer walls. One large but dirty water-butt received the water laid on for the houses; it leaked, and, for such as did not fill their jugs when the water came in, or who had no jugs to fill, there was no water. The former landlord's reply to one of the tenants who asked him to have an iron hoop put round the butt to prevent leakage, was, that 'if he didn't like it [*i.e.*, things as they were], he might leave.' The man to whom this was spoken—by far the best tenant in the place—is now with us, and often gives his spare time to making his room more comfortable, knowing that he will be retained if he does well. . . . Six or seven or eight weeks' rent was due from most tenants, and in some cases, much more; whereas, since I took possession of the houses (of which I collect the rents each week myself), I have *never*

allowed a second week's rent to become due. . . . As soon as I entered into possession, each family had an opportunity of doing better; those who would not pay, or who led clearly immoral lives, were ejected. The rooms they vacated were cleansed; the tenants who showed signs of improvement were moved into them; and thus, in turn, an opportunity was obtained for having each room distempered and painted. The drains were put in order, a large slate cistern was fixed, the wash-house was cleared of its lumber and thrown open on stated days to each tenant in turn. The roof, the plaster, the woodwork, were repaired; the staircase walls were distempered; new grates were fixed; the layers of paper and rag (black with age) were torn from the windows, and glass was put in: out of 192 panes, only 8 were unbroken. The yard and footpath were paved. The rooms, as a rule, were re-let at the same prices at which they had been let before: but tenants with large families were counselled to take two rooms, and for these much less was charged than if let singly; this plan I continue to pursue. Incoming tenants are not allowed to take a decidedly insufficient quantity of room, and no sub-letting is permitted. The elder girls are employed three times a-week in scrubbing the passages in the houses, for the cleaning of which the landlady is responsible. For this work they are paid, and by it they learn habits of cleanliness. It is, of course, within the authority of the landlady also to insist on

cleanliness of wash-houses, staircases, and staircase windows; and even to remonstrate concerning the rooms themselves, if they are habitually dirty. The pecuniary result has been very satisfactory. Five per cent interest has been paid on all the capital invested. A fund for the repayment of capital is accumulating. A liberal allowance has been made for repairs; and here I may speak of the means adopted for making the tenants careful about breakage and waste. The sum allowed yearly for repairs is fixed for each house; and if it has not all been spent in restoring and replacing, the surplus is used for providing such additional appliances as the tenants themselves desire. It is, therefore, their interest to keep the expenditure for repairs as low as possible; and instead of committing the wanton damage common among tenants of their class, they are careful to avoid injury, and very helpful in finding economical methods of restoring what is broken or worn out, often doing little repairs of their own accord."

This admirable work of Miss Hill's—so thoroughly sensible and practical, combining self-denying labour for behoof of the poor, with a profitable investment—is strongly recommended to the attention of those who are seeking a way by which, through purely secular means, the poor in our own towns may be raised in the social scale and help in their own advancement. An association formed in each town for buying up property in the poorest localities, re-

building, if ruinous, or repairing and making the rooms comfortable when not, and then, on the principle adopted by Miss Hill, of gradually training the inmates to habits of tidiness and self-respect, could not fail to be productive of much good. The same work can also be done by private individuals as well as by associations; and if by one or more owners of such dwellings in full sympathy with the wretched inhabitants, why not by many? Why not by all who possess property of the kind, if they only understood their duties, and then we should have a speedy solution of the problem, so far as the physical aspect of it is concerned?

Another of the secular agencies for improving the physical condition of the sunken populations is *the societies formed in several of the towns for improving the temporal condition of the poor*. These are undenominational, and it is better that, having a primarily temporal purpose, they should not be connected with any religious denomination. At the same time, they may, and do, seek to carry the agents of the various Churches along with them in their work. They are of great use in giving relief to those who are in temporary difficulties, and who, without it, might be converted into the lapsed masses. They encourage those who are willing to do well, and often give work to those who are willing to work. They have kept many a family, especially such as have no claims for parochial relief, from starvation.

But, without a knowledge of the spiritual condition of many of the claimants, which can best be obtained by spiritual agencies, it is often impossible to distinguish the deserving objects from the undeserving. It is in regard to this that these associations run the greatest risk of failure. Still, a large experience on the part of the distributing agents will give them an insight into the true character and condition of the class who require the aid; and if the giving of temporal benefit is accompanied with Christian sympathy, these associations are indirectly a great help to the Churches, especially where there is a proper understanding between the one and the other.

Co-operative Societies for securing pure and cheap food for the poor, is another important secular agency for improving the condition of the lapsed populations. The ultimate success of these rests very much with the poor themselves; but it is the province of philanthropy to set the machinery in motion whereby the end can be effected, and to see that the co-operation be started on sound and enduring principles. There is no surer means of teaching them self-respect and thrift. Not only directly, but indirectly, have these co-operative societies, wherever they have been established and conducted on right principles, been a means of profit to the working classes. True, they have been generally established by, and for behoof of, a class above that whose claims have been considered, but there is no reason

why they should not succeed among the very poorest, and be an equal, if not greater, blessing to them.¹

At all events, both in this and other ways, the poor must not have everything done for them, but must be taught that they can in many ways help themselves. Without this self-help, unless they go hand in hand with the various agents that are seeking to lift them out of the mire, they will never rise to the surface, or, if so raised, they will soon sink into their former condition. "We often hear the cry raised, 'Will nobody help us?' It is a spiritless, hopeless cry. It is sometimes a cry of revolting meanness, especially when it issues from those who, with a little self-denial, sobriety, and thrift, might easily help themselves. The mob orators who gather the 'millions' about them, are very wide of the mark, when, instead of seeking to train their crowds of hearers to habits of frugality, temperance, and self-culture, they encourage them to keep up the cry, 'Will nobody help us?' The cry sickens the soul. It shows gross ignorance of the first elements of personal welfare. Help is in the men themselves. They were born to help and elevate themselves. . . . The poorest men have done it. Why should not every man do it?"—Smiles' Thrift, p. 25.

¹ See Appendix XI.

CHAPTER V.

REMEDIAL MEASURES. SPIRITUAL—(a) BY THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

THERE is, as we have seen in the two preceding chapters, much that can be done and ought to be done by the State, as well as by private associations and individuals, to ameliorate the condition of the Churchless, and not a little help that can be afforded by the poor themselves to remove hindrances to the Church's operations out of the way. The Church (including all the Churches) has a great duty to the Churchless, but where powerful physical hindrances stand in the way, as at present to a considerable extent they do, her power of effecting a thorough reformation is limited. It has already been shown how difficult it is for people crowded into unhealthy localities, starving and in rags, many of them the victims of intemperance, to receive the Gospel as the glad tidings of salvation; and how hunger and impure surroundings are influences so powerful, that you must in some way counteract them ere the truth can be accepted. You could hardly get the inmates of those miserable abodes by any amount of persuasion to come out to

church or hall, or even to private prayer-meeting. As well attempt to fill up the Slough of Despond, as work with any hope of full success under these physical hindrances. Cases there may be here and there of real spiritual improvement, but the great mass will continue as unleavened as ever. What, though you get the drunkard to promise to give up his drunkenness, yet, when every day going to and coming from his work he has to run the gauntlet of half-a-dozen public-houses, the temptation to self-indulgence may be too strong for his weakened will. You may get the thief to promise to lead an honest life, and for a time he may attend on your ministrations, but the pinchings of hunger, or the meeting with his old companions in guilt, prove too much for his virtue, and returning to his old habits, his last state is worse than his first. To bring the Gospel to bear with proper effect on the hearts and lives of such degraded beings, you cannot allow them to be brought face to face with temptations stronger than your own. It is always to be remembered that, even though under ordinarily favourable circumstances for the resistance of temptation, they are subjected from hereditary taints and from the weakness of will engendered by a depraved physical and moral constitution, to far greater trials of virtue than you would be if placed for a time in their circumstances; and that, even under the most favourable conditions, the work of raising them up must be gradual and slow.

Again, it is to be noted that the Church, as a spiritual institution for the improvement of the race, is an imperfect instrument at the best. The treasure of the Gospel is committed to "earthen vessels"; and hence, no ecclesiastical agency for the reformation of the Churchless can be practically complete. True; much more can be accomplished by one kind of organisation than by another. The enthusiasm of the members may make up for faults in organisation; and the Spirit of God working on the hearts of its agents may effect what the best organisation fails to accomplish. Still, as the Spirit of God works by means, and as the best organisations are naturally better fitted to accomplish better spiritual results than the less perfect, it becomes us to inquire as to what experience has found the most suitable for the purpose in view.

This is—

(1) *The Church working territorially.*— It is, as we have already seen,¹ the neglect of the territorial principle in large towns and the adoption of the commercial or shopkeeping system, that has been at the root of much of the neglect of the lapsed populations. Town churches are not now the churches of the parishes in which they are situated, but of the congregations that assemble in them from whatsoever quarter gathered. This leads to the overlapping of spiritual work, and makes purely parochial work, as distinct from congregational, impossible.

¹ See Introductory Chapter.

Hence, as has been argued with irresistible force by Dr Chalmers, Dr James Robertson, founder of the Endowment Scheme, the late Mr Whitelaw, Dr Scott of St George's, Edinburgh, and others who have made this subject their special study, it is only by means of parishes in those localities small enough in point of population to allow the full oversight of them by the minister, and by his working parochially, that a complete account of the Churchless within them can be given. Not only ministers and members of the Church of Scotland, but those of other denominations who have made this subject their study, have borne testimony to this fact. "The true and only remedy for the irreligion of our city," says Rev. James Johnston of Free St James' Church, Glasgow,¹ "is a return to the old parochial system as it was devised and carried out by our reformers and so eloquently advocated by Dr Chalmers." It can easily be conceived that, though the lower and more irreligious parts of a large town were planted thick with churches and eloquent ministers on the commercial or voluntary principle, each one would fill his church of those who chose to come from any quarter of the town, and the consequence would be, that, not the lapsed, but the ordinary church-going people, would form the great majority of his hearers. Under this system, the minister himself would be helpless

¹ See *Rising Tide and How to Stem it*. Glasgow: David Bryce & Son. 1871.

in the matter. He would feel it to be his duty to give his week-day services to those who came under his Sabbath teaching; and though here and there a few of the better classes of the non-church-going might be gathered in, the great bulk of the lapsed would remain outside as before. Any amount of money might be spent, and any amount of Church work might be undertaken, on these conditions, and still the work of bringing in the lapsed would remain undone. Hence, the division of these regions into workable ecclesiastical districts, the planting within each of them of a full parochial machinery, and the making the minister responsible for the spiritual oversight of every individual within the territory, not cared for by other denominations—in other words, the reverting to the old parochial system devised by the Reformers, and still so well adhered to in country districts, is absolutely necessary for the spiritual cultivation of these waste regions of our large towns. Without this, you may have isolated effort doing something, but accomplishing nothing effectually; you will have, perhaps, the representatives of two or three rival denominations working in the same localities, and giving their attentions to the same families, thereby demoralising instead of permanently improving them. Dr Chalmers and others have suggested in regard to this territorial church planted in the midst of the lapsed populations, that, in order to make it answer

the purpose intended as fully as possible, the parishioners should have certain advantages over non-parishioners, such as free sittings or reduced seat-rents, and the first attentions of the minister of the parish; but still, all this would be far from offering a full solution of the problem. If full liberty is given to residents outside the parish to attend and become members of the church (and if the minister is an efficient one he is sure to attract some of the better classes from beyond his parish), then, we have here the thin edge of the wedge in the introduction of the commercial principle, and the evil is perpetuated, though it may be on a smaller scale. Besides, if the worst of the Churchless population are to be trained to church-going habits, they must not be frightened away by the presence of strangers of a better class. In fact, rather than allow them to remain as they are, they should be taught to come in their week-day clothes, that there may be no excuse for their staying away. Moreover, the labour of bringing them in, and the great amount of pastoral superintendence they require, must demand a minister's whole time and strength, and he must not be distracted by outside work nor allow the objects of his care to be frightened away by the presence of respectable strangers. Hence, to make the territorial work effectual, the minister's work must, if possible, as in country parishes, be entirely parochial. His church must be understood to be for the inhabitants

of the parish only; and if others come to him from beyond his parish, it must be understood that they are to rest content with his Sunday's ministrations, and have no claim to his pastoral visitations. Only thus can there be any chance of an effectual spiritual working of the territory committed to him. Only thus can he give that account of that full parish work which the Church should require of him as the minister of the territory assigned to him. There is a cry for the abolition of all seat-rents, but I question if this would be altogether advisable. Members of a church have a certain comfort in occupying their seats when they know that they can claim them as their own; and, though in every territorial church, such as has here been sketched, there should be a considerable number of free sittings, yet, since those who have been brought from a lapsed condition to attend ordinances rise in self-respect and generally improve in circumstances as they continue church-going, many of them would prefer to have seats they could claim as their own; and the fact of paying a small sum for them would give them an increased self-respect.

The territorial labours of a devoted minister daily going out and in among these poor people, cognisant of their temptations, sympathising in their trials, using every effort for their moral elevation, administering the sacraments, must soon make his influence be felt in the gathering in of many within his fold.

One of the difficulties to be contended with is the frequent migration of the poorest inhabitants from one district to another; and hence, the risk of many, who have acquired church-going habits, relapsing into their old condition when no longer under his care. But the migration of the poor is very much a result of their poverty; and their poverty arises in a great measure from their vice and irreligion; and therefore, as their character improves, so will their condition; and so, their need for moving about will grow less. The very fact, also, of the minister's personal influence over them, and of their love of his ministrations, would retain many within his bounds who would otherwise have migrated; and great good would also accrue to those who should actually remove, by the system of transference certificates which would introduce them to the care of the minister of the bounds.

(2) But, working on the territorial principle, and the carrying it out with the greatest faithfulness, is not enough. For the sake of the people, there must also be *endowment*, and such an endowment as shall leave the minister free from distracting cares, and independent of seat-rents and church-door collections. In such a parish as has been sketched, the small income accruing from these latter sources would be all required to defray the necessary church expenses. Now here, as can easily be supposed, is the great difficulty in establishing endowed territories for the

lapsed and poor. How is such a permanent endowment to be obtained as shall secure, not a novice, but a first-rate experienced minister for the work, and make him independent of church income? In wealthy districts, it is comparatively easy to raise a permanent endowment, and to have the minister's living in *quoad sacra* parishes supplemented by seat-rents and church-door collections. In these cases, a small endowment of £100 or £120 may be all that is necessary, because a large sum may be made up from the two sources last mentioned. Thus, there is not much difficulty in helping those who can help themselves. "To those that have, it shall be given." But, in those districts whose claims are being considered, the endowment must be large just in proportion as other sources of income are small or not available at all. And, then, the voluntary principle can have no place here. To have the minister supported, even to the smallest extent, by those to whom he ministers is simply impossible. But a minister of experience cannot be asked by the Church to go down into these desolate regions—to expose himself to many discomforts and dangers, and, perhaps, by his unhealthy labours, to shorten the natural term of his life, without ample provision being made for his temporal wants. He ought to have at least as much as his services could command in any other sphere; if not, indeed, more. A sacrifice it is in one sense—a sacrifice of much ease and worldly comfort; but, on the

other hand, an office most honourable in the sight of God, and of all right-minded men. All honour to those who, with the Word of Life in their hand, go down to those depths to proclaim salvation to perishing souls. How, then, shall these large endowments be obtained? This is a question worthy the serious attention of all friends of the Church, and will occupy our consideration in a future chapter. Meanwhile, let the principle be accepted, that endowed territorial, as distinct from congregational, work, is the only efficient means of giving an account of the lapsed populations.

(3) But, given a territory small enough in point of population to be thoroughly worked, and a sufficient endowment for the minister, something else is wanted—viz., *the church, or suitable building in which the minister's Sunday services are to be held*. In the work among the poor and Churchless in large towns, it is customary to appoint a missionary, generally a student of divinity, who shall gather together the nucleus of a congregation into some hall or schoolroom; and then, after licence and the obtaining a temporary church, he is ordained to minister among them with the prospect of obtaining a permanent church and endowment in course of time. But this congregation will in all likelihood consist only in a small part of those who were non-church-going. Set down in the midst of a dense population, the church will attract many other members of other congregations, who for

the sake of convenience will attach themselves to it. So, the work cannot in any sense be called parochial, but is a farther development of the congregational or commercial system. To properly work such a territory as has been sketched, it would be best to reverse the process. Let an iron or wooden church, of as simple a nature as possible, if a permanent one cannot be obtained, be planted in the centre of the territory, with a minister at once ordained to it, and as full a parochial agency as possible, so that he may begin work with all the advantages of a full parochial organisation. Then, the poor people around him will soon come to regard him as their parish minister, lovingly working for their good, and they will be speedily gained over by his sympathy and friendship. It is of the utmost advantage that any minister working among them should be an ordained minister, able to dispense the sacraments and to attach them by membership to his church. Only thus will a permanent reformation be effected among them. Mere missionary agency, however zealous, unless connected with the work of an ordained minister as part of the parochial machinery, goes for very little.

A workable territory, a permanent endowment, and a church as plain as possible, with a minister of experience labouring faithfully as minister of the parish—these are the spiritual agencies which experience has demonstrated as most effective for the ingathering of the lapsed populations.

CHAPTER VI.

REMEDIAL MEASURES. SPIRITUAL—(b) BY SUBORDINATE AGENCIES, DENOMINATIONAL AND UNDENOMINATIONAL.

As the family is the foundation of society, so is endowed territorial work the foundation of all spiritual agencies for building up the Church among the lapsed. Other means in subordination to this may be most important factors in the process, but outside of Church organisations, they lose much of their efficacy. It is a pleasure to be able to record that, in all our large towns, there is a large number of subordinate agencies at work in the most needy districts, whose agents are working with enthusiasm and with more or less success far from the eye of the busy world.

Among the subordinate agencies that come under our notice is that of what are called *City Missionaries*, professedly undenominational, maintained by the zealous among the several Christian denominations, and working independently of any Church organisation. These city missionaries consist in a small part of licentiates, or of those who are preparing to be such, but chiefly of laymen and Bible-women—all of whom

visit from door to door, and strive to gather the lapsed into meeting-houses, and in other ways to do them good. No one will deny the devotedness of the great majority of these city missionaries, but the results of their missionary efforts are very small in proportion to their labours—the permanent results, it is to be feared, hardly perceptible amid the surrounding ungodliness. “For example, take the Glasgow City Mission, which employs about fifty agents who devote four hours each day to the visitation of the careless classes, and hold two meetings each week, besides having Bible-classes and Sabbath-schools and other appliances for interesting and improving all who choose to avail themselves of them. And how many do these fifty agents succeed in drafting into the fellowship of the Church during a year? About fifty represents the general average.”¹ Experience has abundantly shown that unless you can attach the reformed among the lapsed to some church by means of membership, and gain a permanent influence over them in this way, a great part of mere missionary work is lost. Even as pioneers, these city missionaries, however zealous, cannot effect any real good proportioned to their labours. The influence they exert is merely a personal influence, and hence, owing to the frequent changes among them, most of the work has to be done anew. They labour, but

¹ From a pamphlet entitled ‘Church and the Masses,’ by Rev. David Pirret, of Burnbank U.P. Church, Glasgow.

their successors can hardly be said to enter into their labours. Let, therefore, these missionary agents become connected with some church organisation for gathering in the outcast as auxiliaries to the minister of the parish or territory; let the subscribers to the City Mission funds give their support to such churches of their own communion as are carrying on the work territorially; and every pound given for such an end is likely to effect some permanent good. Working as part of a parochial church organisation, their work can be efficiently superintended and go to swell the sum-total of that accomplished for the permanent good of the district.

As regards *missionaries acting as part of a parochial organisation*, there is abundant scope for their labours. Working among the lapsed, with the view, by first bringing them out to halls or schools for public service, of eventually drafting them into the membership of the Church, they are working with permanent results. Thus labouring under the eye of the minister and kirk-session, those of them that are students of divinity or licentiates are thereby undergoing an excellent training for the ministry. They obtain a knowledge of the wants and miseries of the poor, and acquire a true sympathy with them such as no other experience can give them; they get an insight into human character which cannot fail to be of use to them in their future ministry; and they are adding one and another to the list of those who

from the depths of a sad experience can help to interest the Church at large in this great work.

In the enumeration of the subordinate agencies for the reclamation of the lapsed none stands higher, none is more worthy of attention, than *the ministry of women in the Church*. For some departments of the work, female agency is more efficient than any other can be. Their great power of self-sacrifice, their strong Christian sympathies, their intimate knowledge of female wants and duties, qualify them in a peculiar manner for helping the poor, the ignorant, the vicious, and raising them to a higher life. Among the workers in this mission-field, woman stands pre-eminent not only by the greatness of her sacrifices, but by the largeness of her success. "Not the least honourable duty in love's services is to suffer with the sufferer, to analyse suffering in its minutest details, so as to find out the most hidden fibre that needs support and consolation, to bring comfort out of small things, to show strength by becoming weak with the weak, and vigour by becoming a child with children, to persevere after every one's patience has long died out, and to continue working with undisturbed calmness when the whole world around is agitated with political questions, ecclesiastical controversies, or financial panics. And who so entirely in their right place at this work as women, who, created as they are with a natural instinct for the work of charity, have from their Saviour learned how to do it

in the right spirit, and where to look for the required strength and wisdom ?”¹ Whether this female ministry among the lapsed and poor be the “missing link” to connect them with those above them, we shall not venture to say ; but, at all events, it is an important factor in helping to solve this hitherto unsolved problem. The Bible-woman, under the direction of her kirk-session, or other ecclesiastical organisation, pious, prudent, full of enthusiasm, going forth into the most wretched tenements to speak words of life to her poor or depressed sisters, able to enter into their peculiar difficulties or cares, sowing the seed of Divine truth beside all waters—such an agent cannot fail to make her influence be felt for good. All the more as she comes among them as one of themselves, not dressed in any *outré* fashion, but by the exhibition of a Christian sympathy makes them feel quite at home in her presence. She is often the pioneer into the wilderness untrodden by Christian feet, and she leaves her foot-tracks that others may follow in her path. Very true are the following words uttered by a Bethnal Green clergyman concerning them : “ I consider it a great advantage to the Bible-women that there is nothing distinctive or peculiar in their dress. They come to the poor as one of themselves, sit down by them in sickness, or any other trouble, as one of their neighbours ; they talk to them in their own language, and are,

¹ Liefde's Charities of Europe, vol. i. p. 126.

and *appear*, as one of their own class. There is, therefore, nothing to disturb their intercourse, no prejudice to be overcome, misunderstanding to be explained away; nothing diverts their attention from the subject, and if the Bible-woman is earnest and has tact, she is quite sure to create an interest in her favour."¹ Let such agents of the right sort be multiplied; let them have the sympathies and help of the Christian congregations that send them forth; let the ladies of the better classes sometimes accompany them to the sphere of their labours to see how the good work is going on; and these Bible-women will be a mighty help in the bringing in of the lapsed.

But female agency in the Church is not confined to that of Bible-women going down into the depths to speak the words of life. In this good work, there is large scope for the work of those of a higher class. In teaching the children in the Sabbath-schools, in conducting mothers' meetings, in acting as district visitors and tract-distributors, in organising and superintending cookery classes for the benefit of *the poor*, and in many other ways, they can and do help in the elevation of the lapsed, bringing joy and comfort to many a home.² Much as the higher female agency has developed within the past quarter of a century, there is yet much that remains to be done. There are great capabilities for good, there is a large mine of

¹ Quoted from 'Life Work; or, The Link and the Rivet,' p. 45.

² See Appendix XIII.

Christian usefulness that yet waits to be developed in female agency, systematically employed and forming a part of our territorial Church organisations.¹

It is almost needless to speak of Sabbath-schools as one of the most important agencies in the hands of devoted Christian men and women for the reclamation of the lapsed. Let them be planted thick wherever the population is densest, but always on the territorial principle—each Sabbath-school being the centre for the religious teaching of the young of a well-defined district, and the teachers using all their efforts to gather in all the young of the district into their school. There would thus be a healthy rivalry without any overlapping of work, and the power would be afforded of seeing that all were gathered in. There will be for a time much trying and disheartening work among this class of children, but not so much as there once was, in consequence of the training they now get in the day-school, which teaches them habits of obedience and self-respect. Than the training the young in these districts Sabbath by Sabbath to a knowledge of God's Word and to a holy life, there is no work more honourable, nor any that will yield more pleasure and profit. I remember well the starting of such a school in a certain back street of a northern city a good few years ago. Every endeavour had been made by those visiting the neighbourhood to get the parents to send out their chil-

¹ See under chapter ix.

dren. On the opening Sunday, long before the advertised hour, the hall was filled with a ragged, dirty, and uproarious lot of boys and girls, some as old as 16 or 17, dancing, singing, playing all kinds of mischief. Quiet could only be restored for a moment; and not until some of the worst behaved were expelled, could any order be obtained. The work of bringing such a motley crowd into order and proper training seemed hopeless, but the teachers were full of hope and patience; the superintendent appointed, a plain working man, was full of enthusiasm; and ere months had passed away, a thorough reformation was effected. The good seed here sown in faith and with many prayers has doubtless borne fruit through those many years, and teachers and taught have been equally blessed.

Such undenominational agencies as the *Glasgow Foundry Boys' Religious Society*, which, starting from very small beginnings, has spread a network of spiritual agency for the youth of both sexes over that great city, and others of a similar character in other towns, are a great means of laying hold of boys and girls just beginning life at a time when they are most easily led astray, and combining them into associations for their spiritual benefit. Many have thereby been kept from falling, and many been fitted to take their part as useful and respected citizens.¹

¹ See Appendix XII., where a short account of the Glasgow Foundry Boys' Religious Society is given.

There is a movement, still in its infancy, which, if conducted with proper delicacy and prudence, may be productive of great effects—viz., the *White-cross Movement*. It is one which will have much work to do among all classes, but it is referred to here as an agency that may be of much use in instilling a purer tone into that class whose claims we are considering, and remedying some of those gross evils which have their roots in the poverty and overcrowding of the lapsed populations. But to do this, it must go hand in hand with other Christian agencies; and if in union and full sympathy with the Churches, so much the better. If it can stop or materially lessen the awful prostitution that so much abounds in all our larger, and in many of our smaller, towns; if it can raise up a band of devoted Christians who shall imbue the community with a horror of this frightful vice, and thus strike at the root of the social evil, while at the same time it rescues the victims of this vice from temporal and eternal destruction, it will have accomplished a noble and blessed work.

This is the proper place to refer to such spiritual agencies outside the Churches, for behoof of the spiritually destitute, as the *Blue Ribbon and Salvation Armies*. The former is an organisation for promoting temperance through Gospel agencies, and in this respect has, I believe, struck the right key-note. The latter is an attempt, through the outward pomp and pageantry and nomenclature of military estab-

lishments, to draw the attention chiefly of the lower classes to the claims of the Gospel. With somewhat that is objectionable in their organisation and mode of working, they yet appeal powerfully to the senses and the imagination of the poorer classes. They give the objects they are seeking to benefit a sense of human brotherhood such as other religious agencies seem to have failed to impart. They seem, at any rate, to have been able to stir the masses to their very depths. It is something to have awakened to a sense of their spiritual condition the multitudes of our sunken populations, to have rescued many of them from their sinful habits and made them rejoice in the sense of Christian freedom. How far this influence may be due to mere temporary excitement, or how far it may effect a permanent improvement, time will show. The danger of all these organisations is that, depending so much on the energy and organising power of their originators, they are apt to fall to pieces when deprived of their personal influence. Another is, that of degenerating into such extravagances as fairly undo all the good work they have accomplished. This seems to be already happening in the case of the Salvation Army. Nevertheless, there is something wonderful in the energy and self-sacrifice of its officers, in its power of self-expansion, and in the enthusiasm with which it endeavours to fulfil our Lord's parting commands to "Go into all the world, and preach the

Gospel to every creature." Though there may be much to avoid, there is also much that the Churches may learn from these powerful agencies in the regeneration of the lapsed. Two great lessons, at least, the Christian Churches, working so long in established grooves, may lay to heart. First, the greater need of giving these classes to feel their sense of brotherhood in the Elder Brother, in whose earthly life, with its blessed power of human sympathy and unselfish devotion to the help of the poor and the outcast, they have a guarantee for His present sympathies and love. The other, the need of a stronger appeal to the senses in the agencies employed for their reformation. The Churches must get more and more out of the old rut and adopt new methods, if they ever hope to bring in the lapsed whom they have lost. Certain it is, that if they delay much longer in fulfilling the great work with which they are intrusted, for the reformation of the outcasts, it will be taken up and carried out by less efficient organisations, which, in attempting to sow the good seed, may mingle not a little tares. And, in attempting to undertake this duty when too late, the Churches may find that they have to undo not a little evil they might have prevented, and thus have a twofold enemy to contend with.

CHAPTER VII.

CO-OPERATION OF ALL THE EVANGELICAL CHURCHES, AND RECOGNITION OF EACH OTHER'S WORK, NECESSARY FOR THE COMPLETE SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

THAT the Church of Scotland has certain advantages for the ingathering of the lapsed has been already shown, and need here be only in a general way alluded to. In her parochial divisions, her legally defined jurisdiction, her fixed endowments, which, though often small, yet allow the liberality of her members to be exhibited more in the way of extending parishes than of supplying stipends for charges already settled, she possesses advantages superior to every other for supplying spiritual ministrations to the lapsed and poor. In the case of Churches, all of whose endowments or stipends are raised from the contributions of their members, it is of great advantage that charges should be planted where nearly all or a considerable amount of stipend can be locally raised. The less that can be raised in the locality, the greater is the drain on the central fund. Hence

the strong temptation unendowed Churches have, in spite of themselves, to regard the maintenance of the minister as one of the chief elements in the selection of a locality for the establishment of a new charge. When a permanent endowment large enough for the support of a minister is obtained, then it matters not how poor the locality in which his charge is placed, for he can work independent of local aid, seeking not the contributions of the poor but themselves. Hence, however great the difficulty on the part of the Established Church in planting endowed churches in the midst of the poorest localities, in the case of the unestablished Churches it is greater far. On the purely voluntary system, it is simply impossible. Experience has taught them, as it has taught the Church of Scotland, that only as they carry out the principle of endowed territorial work among the lapsed populations, can they have any real success.

But, working at random on the purely commercial system, without any agreement among each other as to the division of the territories to be worked, the Churches can never fulfil their mission to the outcast poor. No multiplication of edifices, no number of agencies working independent of each other, can ever solve the problem. For what is the fact patent to all? That there is much evangelistic zeal among many of the members of all the Churches, will not be denied. There is also a large number of agencies at work in all

our large towns for the spiritual reformation of the lapsed: and a considerable amount of money is expended for this end. But with what result? Not only are these large moral wastes still unreclaimed, but it is to be feared that these, in some of the towns at least, are increasing rather than diminishing. It is a sad reflection, as already mentioned, that, were the money yearly expended in evangelising those districts often by rival Churches hindering each other's work to be expended by those Churches systematically and in co-operation, that spiritual destitution would have long ere now sensibly diminished, if it had not altogether disappeared. For the end here sought, incorporate union is not absolutely needed; but only a union of method, and purpose, and a healthy rivalry as to which should do most in this great work. The spirit of Abraham is that which should actuate the Churches in this benevolent crusade: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee. . . . If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left."

We must deal with facts as they are. We must accept the sad fact that these Churches have been working apart from each other, in no real spirit of friendliness, and that, because of the want of that united action, the common enemy has come in like a flood; and the fields that should have been cultivated for God have become a howling wilderness. How long

because of this want of union shall the enemy point the finger of scorn ?

Now, on which of the Churches does the duty devolve of making the first advances for co-operative union in this grand work ? Clearly on the Church of Scotland, by right of her position, of her age as the mother Church, and the natural advantages she possesses. Why should she not fairly and honestly confess her inability alone and unaided to cope with the ever-growing mass of irreligion in our large towns ? There is no dishonour in such a confession when the reasons of her failure are fairly weighed, any more than it is dishonourable in the other Churches, for the reasons stated, to confess their inability. To that Church which shall invite the co-operation of the other Churches in this great work belongs the real honour. Let the Church of Scotland, then, consider it her duty and her privilege to make offers for this Christian co-operation—to hold out the right hand of fellowship to all that will join with her in this campaign against the kingdom of darkness—to say, that while she is willing to bear her share, and more than her share, in the burden, she is equally willing to divide the land to be subdued with those that will come to her help. The principle of successful working being virtually acknowledged, there should not be great difficulty in establishing a system of co-operation. For this end, let a great Church association be

established in each town, composed of representatives of each of the affiliated Churches, with consent of the Church Courts concerned. Let this association, thoroughly accredited and representative as it should be, divide the territory to be worked into manageable districts; let the representatives of each of the co-operating Churches say how many of these selected districts they will take up to work on the common principle adopted by the association; let those who have the several territories assigned them be responsible for the establishment of suitable agencies; let them, as part fulfilment of their obligations, give to the association, in an annual report, as accurate statistics as possible of the amount of work done and the amount yet to do; let the association raise as large funds as possible; and whatever funds they possess, let them be equally divided annually among the Churches represented in it according to the number of territories worked, partly for the purpose of obtaining accurate statistics, and partly to help in maintaining the several agencies employed. Working thus side by side, not in opposition, not interfering with one another's districts, but in healthy rivalry, the Churches would come to know each other better and recognise the value of each other's services, instead of, as now, working very much at random within the same territory and debauching the poor, by each bestowing charity on the same individual; overdoing certain localities and leaving the

others neglected. This association would not be composed of heterogeneous elements gathered together by accident, or simply with a common purpose, but ought to be properly representative of the Churches, its members elected by the Church Courts and responsible to the Church they represent. Would it not be a welcome sight, even to the outside world, to see our Presbyterian and other Evangelical Churches working in healthy rivalry side by side for so grand a purpose, even that for wiping out that dark blot of moral waste which is a disgrace to our Christian civilisation?

The general interest that is now being awakened in the elevation of the masses—the discussions regarding it which will shortly take place in Parliament, will do much to ripen public opinion; and if the Churches will not lead the van, and show their earnestness by combination, they will be forced at length to stand by and allow other agencies far less efficient to take their place. One preliminary difficulty to the hearty co-operation spoken of, is the cry for Disestablishment which has been raised in some of the Dissenting Churches, and which is already showing its baneful effects in alienating from each other those who should be friends and fellow-workers; and in withdrawing the agitators from the real work which devolves on the Churches to which they belong. Because of this public attempt to injure the usefulness of the Church of Scotland, by

crippling her resources, and depriving her of those very advantages she possesses for the ingathering of the lapsed—because of this some excellent ministers of that Church object to any such co-operation as here proposed. Nor are they greatly to be blamed. Co-operation, to be real, implies a unity of spirit founded on mutual esteem and love. But those who are moving in this agitation are doing what they can to make real co-operation for this or any other good work impossible. Had the money spent, or proposed yet to be spent in this miserable, and as yet futile, campaign, been spent in arousing the country to a sense of its duty to the outcast populations, and in co-operating with the Established Church for their evangelisation, the problem would be near its solution. The Christian Churches would then be seen to be worthy of their position; would have been drawing nearer, instead of looking askance at, each other; charity and goodwill would have prevailed, and “God, even our God, would have blessed us.” To be fighting with each other while the enemy is gathering strength—to be weakening instead of strengthening each other’s hands in face of a common danger, is surely a policy as unchristian as it is suicidal. A wooer does not usually gain the object of his affection by hard blows and calling of hard names; by asking her to renounce her dowry, that she may enter the happy union as poor and crestfallen as possible.

Why should the Church of Scotland be asked to renounce the great advantages she possesses as an Established Church for the sake of a sentiment, and be for several generations incapacitated, through the weakness engendered by Disestablishment, for engaging in the work at all? It has taken the greater part of forty years to fill up the breaches made by the secession of 1843; and now that she has gained more than her former strength, and is in a better position than she has been any time previous in her history to cope with this spiritual destitution, she would be thrown back farther than ever, should the policy of Disestablishment become at any time successful. If the disestablishing clergy (and it is ministers that have been the prime instigators, and most active promoters of this movement) are so blind as not to discern that their attempts are making ecclesiastical union impossible, and only promoting emulation and strife instead of peace and goodwill among men, the matter will appear in a different light to the intelligent laity who have a cooler judgment and are less blinded by ecclesiastical prejudices.¹

¹ The Disestablishers, it seems, are desirous of opening a new campaign against the Established Church by raising £20,000 to supply the sinews of war. Would some good genius suggest to them that it might be more usefully employed in making war on the intemperance and godlessness of the land, and in preaching a gospel of peace and goodwill to those many thousands in our dens and alleys whom all the Churches have neglected?

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEREIN THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND NEEDS A NEW DEPARTURE
IN HER EFFORTS TOWARDS THE RECOVERY OF THE LAPSED
—(I.) IN THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW, OR THE EXPANSION OF
PRESENT, AGENCIES.

HAS the Church of Scotland, even by herself, as yet exhausted all the means at her disposal for the ingathering of the lapsed? No one who considers her advantages as a National Church and the resources at her command will venture to say so. The unavoidable causes of her failure have been already considered in the Introduction to this volume; but there are others over which she has proper control that may suggest themselves to dispassionate critics. One of these is, that the Church as a Church is only slowly coming to the realisation of the importance of the problem with which she has to deal. In viewing the past work of the Church of Scotland, it is impossible to overlook the renewed energy with which, since recovering from the first effects of the lamentable secession of 1843, she has girded herself to almost every kind of Christian work that lay to her hand.

In the large number of parishes added to her ecclesiastical economy; in the zeal of her ministers and members in promoting many a good work within their several parishes; in the increased interest taken in her foreign and many of her home enterprises; and in her desire to work hand in hand with all who are serving her great Master and Head, she has shown herself a living and progressive Church, worthy, in some measure, of her high position in the country. But the Home Mission work of the Church has as yet failed to touch the very lowest classes of our towns as it has those in social position above them. It has done a large amount of good among those who, but for its agencies, might soon have sunk into the condition of the lapsed—the dwellers in many of the crowded localities of our mining and manufacturing populations; and not a little, also, among those who can afford to pay for religious ordinances. Now, let it be granted to its fullest extent, that it has accomplished among these classes a large measure of good—that it has evoked a liberality on the part of the richer classes by the help afforded, which would otherwise have lain dormant—that it has helped to plant with churches and church ordinances nearly all the localities in towns and crowded villages where the people have been more or less able to supplement Home Mission grants. Let all this be granted to its fullest extent, as also the wisdom, energy, and enthusiasm with which our Home Schemes have been

administered. But there now faces us the problem of the Churchless poor—of the many thousands centered in the most densely peopled districts of our large towns, who have neither the will nor the means to supplement Home Mission efforts. Among the churches that have been built and endowed, very few are for those only who have no power whatsoever of helping themselves. Districts where the pressure of human beings is so great that the pure air of heaven cannot be breathed, and the decencies of life cannot be observed; where hunger and misery stalk like gaunt skeletons, and vice rears her horrid crest; where children either die off in infancy, or if surviving, have little chance in life—these are still to be found in our large towns unoccupied by any of the churches, or with, perhaps, only a missionary agency employed for their reformation. This state of matters does not arise from intentional neglect, but from the difficulty referred to in chapter v. of raising such a sum for church-building and endowing of such parishes as shall be sufficient to maintain an experienced minister without seat-rents and church-door collections. Where there is money enough in a district to build and endow a church with the aid of the Home Mission and Endowment Schemes, there is little difficulty in obtaining a *quoad sacra* parish with its full parochial equipment; and what is wanting in the endowment for the full support of the minister is locally obtained; but here, the money to build

and endow churches and establish needful parochial agencies in the poor and spiritually destitute districts must all come from sources beyond it.

How, then, are the requisite funds to be raised for such a purpose? To do this, the Church must take ways and means of impressing her members with the needs of the Churchless, and interest them in the cause. We know, as a matter of experience, that money is seldom wanting for any Christian purpose for which a good cause is fully made out. Experience has also shown that the best way of interesting the Christian people is to bring the facts and bearings of the case fully before them. This, then, in the cause referred to, requires to be more fully done. Isolated attempts have been made; one kirk-session here and another there has taken full account of the number and condition of the non-church-going within its territory, and has made earnest, and generally successful, appeals to the members for the support of the missionary operations. Parish missionaries who have sounded the depths, have now and then described in plain and truthful language the condition, physical and moral, of those lying outside the Churches whom they have visited; but the reports have seldom found their way beyond the kirk-session archives. Individual ministers, also, deeply impressed with the state of those uncared-for multitudes, have sounded a note of alarm, but their appeals have not gone with the

full weight of the Church's authority. The Church, as a Church, has not as yet given injunctions to her office-bearers in our towns, nor afforded the means, to take a periodical account of the Churchless within their several bounds. True, the Committee on Christian Life and Work made some years ago a praiseworthy effort to obtain accurate statistics, and were warmly seconded by a number of town ministers; but want of funds to cover the expense of a periodical investigation into the number and condition of *all* the Churchless, and of power to see that its injunctions are carried out, has been an obstacle to the completion of this necessary work. In appealing for pecuniary help, it is necessary that the Church should lay bare to the full extent the awful condition of those multitudes of human beings living without religion and dying without hope. There are revelations in some of these regions which, if truthfully and faithfully made, as the revelations that are now being made of the condition of the outcast poor of London, would thrill the hearts of the most lifeless members of the Church, and probably evoke a liberality to improve their condition now unexampled. We have been working hitherto round the hard outer crust of the volcano, scarce venturing to look down into the fires that are slumbering in the crater below.

It has more than once been suggested that means should be furnished to kirk-sessions of all the town

parishes in which the Churchless in any number exist, for a periodical investigation into their religious condition; and that the Church, having furnished these means from her Home Mission Funds, should require from these kirk-sessions an account of their work. This would be the first step towards the recognition of the Church's responsibility to the Churchless and poor. It would help to dispel the apathy that reigns among her members regarding their duty to this class of the community; it would show from time to time the work that has been fully accomplished, and what yet remains to be done. None but the agents of the Churches could furnish this information aright. None but those who have had considerable experience in sounding the depths of our lapsed populations, and by personal interest in them have gained their confidence, could give anything like an adequate account of their number and condition.

In order that much greater liberality may be evoked in behalf of the Churchless, it is necessary not only that their number and condition be fully and periodically made known, but also that a special channel be provided through which that liberality may flow. A new Home Mission Scheme has been suggested by the Moderator of the General Assembly of 1883, Dr Rankine, in his excellent closing address.¹ Preferable, I think, would be a special

¹ "May not a new Home Scheme be instituted—missionary in the

branch of the old Home and Endowment Schemes for the promotion of endowed territorial work among the lapsed populations. Too many separate schemes are apt to confuse and dissipate the gifts of the members. But, until some such expedient as this is adopted, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to test the interest of the members of the Church in this branch of her work.

The very fact of the helplessness of this class in reference to the supply of spiritual ordinances ought to establish a strong claim on the liberality of the Church, compared with the claims of those who can in some way or other help themselves. The work of reclaiming the outcasts by all the agencies at the Church's command would constitute a real Home Mission—a mission for the spiritually helpless who know not God, as much as the Foreign Mission proper is for the conversion of the heathen world.

Another new departure required of the Church in her duty towards the vicious and Churchless *is a much greater and more universal effort than has yet been made to counteract the temptations to intemperance.* It can hardly be doubted that the Churches of the land, if united in their efforts to lessen the temptations to this terrible vice, could form a strong public opinion on the subject, sufficient to influence

highest sense, as directed to the recovery of the most lapsed masses? Support would not be wanting. The public Christian conscience, now so disquieted, would seek relief by liberal gifts."—P. 17.

any Government in their favour. It is sometimes said that the Church herself is a great temperance association, and that all her members are pledged to temperance by the very terms of Church membership; and that, hence, the establishment of any special Church agencies for diminishing intemperance is unnecessary. But so is the Church a missionary association, and a governing body; but this does not prevent her establishing missionary associations and subordinate courts of government. If the Church is in herself a temperance association, requiring no special temperance agencies, why is it that she has allowed the gigantic evils of intemperance to grow and flourish in the land? This plea for inactivity is wellnigh exploded; and the action at length taken by the Church of Scotland and other Churches against the evils of intemperance is sufficient to show that they attach no weight to this *laissez faire* argument. It is, indeed, but late in the day that the Established Church has taken up the question of temperance as a distinct branch of her organisation, and the slight favour she has shown this most important scheme proves her still only half-hearted in the matter. It has been left to separate and undenominational organisations to originate and carry on the movement until it has secured the popular ear. The Gospel Temperance and other associations have done not a little to diminish drinking among the poorer classes and to create a sound public opinion. Mistakes have

been made, and exaggerated statements have sometimes been put forth, which have created more or less prejudice against the movement, and for a time kept men of position and influence from joining it. Evil has been done by sometimes committing the cause to men with crotchets, not amenable to reason, and attempting to drive, instead of leading, public opinion; but the time for sneering at the movement, and judging of it by the weak zeal of some of its leaders, is past; and those zealous men who have been directing the temperance crusade outside the Churches have now found their reward in the arresting of public attention, and in the combination of various forces for the promotion of national temperance. To give the movement, however, anything like national success, two conditions seem to be absolutely necessary. First, that it should be distinctly a Gospel movement—a branch of the great Gospel scheme for human salvation. Intemperance is so directly an effect of the radical taint of sin in human nature, that no other agency but that which effects the conversion of man from sin unto God can adequately cope with it. Results have often been wrought on the unchanged heart in shutting it out from the temptations to intemperance. From worldly motives, from the fear of mere natural consequences, from the force of public opinion, men have sometimes been induced to give up drinking, who have not seen the evil in the light of God's judgment; but there is

no real barrier against this vice, no radical and universal cure, but a change of heart. Therefore, in making the attack upon the demon of intemperance a Gospel temperance crusade, the reformers of the present day are, without doubt, on the right track. But this being so, it follows, in the second place, as a natural consequence, that the best organisation for making a successful inroad on this national vice should be one in connection with the Churches. If it be granted that the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the only effectual remedy against this and the other evils springing from the radical taint of human nature, it follows that the Church, as a divinely appointed organisation for the propagation of the Gospel, should be the best for the suppression of national intemperance. The connection also of the reformed drunkard with the Church by membership, imparts to him one of the strongest motives for maintaining his self-respect, and brings him at the same time under the eye of those who can watch his progress and help him on by Christian sympathy. A temperance crusade outside of the Churches may do much to attract public attention and secure a large number of present results, but to make them permanent, the reformed must not be left as mere units to sink out of sight and keep themselves up as best they may, but be laid hold of by Church agencies to bring them into the fellowship of the general body of believers.

Now, it is here, I conceive, that the Church of Scotland, as a spiritual organisation for the reformation of society, has failed to realise her great power for good, and has left very much to organisations outside of all the Churches the honourable task of being pioneers in the temperance movement. Both directly and indirectly, the Church may wield an enormous influence for good in fighting the demon of intemperance. She may do much indirectly in helping to create a sound public opinion on the subject—in so setting forth the evils of intemperance and proclaiming the duty of the temperate towards it as that the heart of the nation shall be stirred, and the Legislature be at length compelled to take all hindrances to the action of the Churches out of the way. She may do much, also, directly in instituting temperance societies side by side with other Christian agencies, and may make her efforts for the promoting of temperance co-ordinate with those for preaching the Gospel among the lapsed. But before this result can be attained, she must take up the temperance question in earnest as one of the grandest and most needful of her schemes; it must occupy a large share of her councils and bulk largely in her annual reports. If this vice is a truly national vice, as every one cognisant with its widespread effects must admit that it is, it surely claims first the attention of the National Church; if it is productive of more misery,

more poverty, more crime, and more lapsing from Church ordinances, than all the other vices put together, it is surely high time the Church were buckling on her armour, and gathering all her forces to "come to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

CHAPTER IX.

WHEREIN THE CHURCH NEEDS A NEW DEPARTURE IN HER EFFORTS TOWARDS THE RECOVERY OF THE LAPSED — (II.) IN THE VAST MULTIPLICATION OF INDIVIDUAL MISSIONARY EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH.

It has sometimes been remarked, that it is the neglect of duty on the part of the members of the Church that makes Home Missions necessary at all.¹ If all the members of our Christian Churches recognised their duty as home missionaries for bringing in the outcasts, then there should be hardly a household in the land without the blessings of family religion and public worship. Not only the giving freely of their means, which is an easy thing for many to do, but the giving of themselves to the work of evangelisation, is what the Church of Christ as an aggressive agency requires. For the field of Foreign Missions, the Church must send her representatives to bring in the heathen into the fold; for the Home Mission field, the great missionary agents should be the members of the Church themselves. Whatever

¹ See sermon on Home Missions in 'Creed and Conduct,' by Rev. Dr Story, Rosneath.

minor agencies there be for the reclamation of the lapsed, it is, after all, the Gospel faithfully proclaimed and diligently practised that is the surest remedy for all the moral evils that afflict our race. But when people speak of the effects of the Gospel on the outcast populations, they often talk very much at random, as if it were some vague supernatural influence exerted they know not how, and penetrating they know not whither. The Gospel, it need hardly be said, has its chief influence as reflected in the pure and self-sacrificing lives of Christian professors. When the truths of our holy religion are deeply felt in the hearts of men, they burn with a natural desire to communicate that which has been the means of their own spiritual healing to others. The truth is, therefore, self-propagating. As the seed must be planted in the soil ere it can germinate and multiply itself in the production of similar fruit, so it is only as it takes root in men's hearts that the divine seed can grow and multiply. In the previous chapter, there has been shown the need that exists for the awakening in the members of the Church of a deeper interest in the Churchless populations, and the requirement for this purpose of a proper representation of their number and condition in order to the evoking of a greater liberality and to a more earnest grappling with the problem. But this is not enough. Those who have the means and the opportunity must give not only their money, but

themselves. In other words, each member of the Church, enjoying as such his or her Christian privileges, must be, in fact, a home missionary. We need in each of our large towns a great Christian army, composed of all who have a little time on their hands—if not on the week-days, yet on Sabbath afternoons (and this will comprise the great majority of Church members), and not one or two here and there, to go forth in the name of the Lord to penetrate the homes where the Churchless congregate, and by the power of individual Christian sympathy, by the strong influence of Christian self-sacrifice, strive to bring the wretched inmates to a condition of comfort and Christian hope. Even in those town parishes which contain a large number of respectable church-going people, there are generally some localities inhabited by the Churchless and poor. On whom should these have so strong a claim as on the members of the congregation who worship in the church of their parish? In most cases, especially where there is some missionary agency at work, the number and condition of those could be easily ascertained. If then, say, every two or three members of the congregation imbued with a missionary spirit were to take as many, or more, of such families under their special charge, and make themselves responsible for visiting them, helping them in their temporal difficulties, encouraging them in habits of cleanliness and self-respect, and stimulating them to

attend on Christian ordinances, soon would the power of Christian effort manifest itself in a thorough reformation of those families and their homes. Though the minister of the parish be forced from the nature of his congregation to do chiefly congregational instead of parochial work, he would still be able, by such a grand instrumentality as this, to give an account of all those within his parish who did not receive the careful attention of other denominations. By this combined and well-regulated missionary effort, a double benefit would accrue, both to those who give their services and those who receive them. As bearing upon the practicability of this scheme of individual missionary effort, and of adopting of poor families, the following sentences may be quoted from one of the earlier reports of the Port-Dundas Mission in connection with Park Church, Glasgow: "The plan of 'adopting' families," it goes on to say, "has been continued with good effect. The intercourse thus necessarily caused between the rich and the poor is fraught with the highest good to both. In regard to the mode of working this charity, we cannot do better than quote from the last report: 'Let the charity be given with manifestation of personal sympathy, not officially, not coldly, not through servants or third parties; but let the rich go and see the homes they bless, and the poor will neither be the only nor the chief gainers by the intercourse.'"

Double service on the Lord's Day, as has been suggested, might well be given up, if the members of the congregation were to occupy the afternoons in practical Christian work. There is not a church-going family but might find a suitable sphere and abundant scope for its Christian energies in real missionary work among the old and young of our sunken populations. If there were not sufficient scope in their own parishes, some of which might contain but comparatively few of the lapsed and poor, there would be abundance in such a parish as has been sketched in chapter v., specially endowed for the poorer districts. The ministers of these could not but welcome the aid of Christian workers from the wealthier congregations, and would be always willing to assign them special districts in which to work, or destitute families for whom they might care. The home missionary spirit, if properly evoked among the members of the Church, will not want outlets for its manifestation. If but a tithe of the good were done by each member so labouring in the Master's cause and working according to an understood arrangement, which has been done by some voluntary workers, many of whose good deeds are known only in the homes of the poor, a great part of the spiritual destitution which now lies as a blot upon our Christian Churches would disappear.¹ What was it gave such an impulse to the spread

¹ See Appendix XIII.

of Christianity in the first three or four centuries of the Christian era but just that each one, whose heart the Divine truth had touched, considered himself a missionary to proclaim the truth abroad? Kindling with emotion at the reception of the truth, he burned to communicate the good news to others; and so, not in arithmetical, but in geometrical, ratio, did the Word of God prevail. By untiring labours, by constant self-sacrifice, by unflinching deaths, the testimony of the early witnesses for Christ prevailed over the heathenism of the Roman world, and Christianity was enthroned in the palace of the Cæsars. There is too little, far too little, of that universal missionary spirit existing now. Self-sacrificing men and women there still are, the very salt of the earth, spending and being spent for the Master's cause. But it is needful that the large majority also should act in their spirit. True, many give their sixpences, or half-crowns, or even pounds; there are examples here and there of munificent liberality for the Home Mission cause; but to give money requires little or no self-sacrifice on the part of many. How few of those who give their money with more or less willingness give themselves! It may look like a paradox, but it is true nevertheless, that the need for the existence of a Home Mission Scheme is a reproach to the Christianity of our age. We can hardly conceive of a Home Mission Scheme taking its rise in the first and second centuries when each

Christian man and woman was a living and self-sacrificing witness for Christ.

The last half-century has witnessed a vast increase of the wealth of the country. New discoveries and scientific inventions have supplied the means of adding to our comforts and ministering to our luxuries. In a comparatively small number of years, vast fortunes have been accumulated. Riches have flowed into the coffers of the upper and middle classes. And with sudden increase of riches, there has come the strong temptation to self-indulgence. The habits acquired through the vast increase of wealth, of luxurious self-indulgence, are hurtful to the individual and to society. By this, the gulf between the rich and poor has been widened and not lessened. Riches acquired or inherited, if not applied with a liberal hand to the benefit of society, are a source of weakness to the possessor. The gulf that has been widening through increasing national prosperity between high and low can only be bridged by a large amount of self-sacrifice on the part of the rich towards the poor. Until this spirit more widely prevails, and finds its manifestation not only in money-giving but in personal work—in the lending of a helping hand to lift up the outcast poor—the problem of their restoration will remain unsolved.

But, while the duty of personal labour on the part of those to whom God has given the time and the means is abundantly clear, it is equally the duty of the Churches

not only to fan the spirit of self-sacrifice, but to give it proper direction. For this, the ministers and kirk-sessions have a great responsibility and a clearly defined duty. Any great work left to individual and isolated effort is sure to fall short of the success intended. Unless the families requiring the attention and missionary efforts of the members of the congregation are registered by the kirk-session, and the workers properly told off for the duty, so that there shall be no willing workers left out of account, and none needing help neglected, the work will be but imperfectly done at the best. To adopt the nomenclature or foolish pranks of the Salvation Army would be suicidal on the part of the Christian Church; but would it not be a delightful thing to witness each congregation assuming the character of a Christian army, going forth to make war upon poverty, vice, irreligion, and using all the means that Christianity has put in their power for the suppression of intemperance and the promotion of purity, cleanliness, and Christian well-doing, till the voice of praise and prayer shall be heard in regions where now are heard too often drunken maledictions, and the wail of misery and of despair?

CHAPTER X.

THE CHURCH'S MISSION TO THE CULTURED AND SCEPTICAL
CLASSES OUTSIDE THE CHURCHES.

WERE the whole of the Churchless comprised within the regions of the poorest and most wretched of our large cities, the problem of their ingathering would be simpler than it now is. It would still be a difficult one; but as it is, the fact that there is a considerable number of well-to-do people—many of them most intelligent and respectable, some highly cultured—that for one reason or other remain outside the Churches, vastly increases the difficulties of the solution of the problem. It is sometimes affirmed with a great amount of assurance, that the culture of the age is outside the Churches. This is a statement entirely misleading. The fact of a cultured man being connected with no Church is often specially noticed, but if he is a Churchman, his being so is taken as a matter of course! There cannot be a doubt, that the great bulk of the intelligent, the learned—of those well versed in literature, and even in the

natural sciences, is within the pale of the visible Church. Among these are comprehended men eminent for their piety, exemplary in all the relations of life, commending by their character and high station religion to all. But this cannot blind us to the fact that there is a considerable, and, it is to be feared, an increasing number, of intellectual and well-to-do people who claim connection with no Church—who, for one reason or other, refuse submission to the Christian faith; of whom some are not neglectful of the private ordinances of religion though they have discarded the public for some reason satisfactory to themselves; others of whom have discarded revealed religion; and if they believe in any religious sanctions at all, hold by the uncertain dictates of natural religion. Some have become so impressed with the universal prevalence of natural law, that they fail to recognise the laws of the spiritual world, or even the presence of a Divine Lawgiver at all. The natural with them has pushed out, and taken the place of the supernatural. A revelation *ab extra* given to the world through human instrumentality and attested by miracles, seems to them an impossibility, if not an absurdity. The wide prevalence of present-day scepticism, whatever its origin, cannot but be a source of weakness to the Church. The fact of men of great name ignoring the claims of religion has no little influence on the unthinking and weak. The laws of the

natural world are easily cognisable by shallow and unspiritual minds; spiritual laws, lying beyond the region of the senses, require for their full recognition a mind and heart in harmony with spiritual realities. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." The very fact of some of our most eminent scientists attempting by their natural theories to solve all human phenomena, unduly exalting the material and ignoring the spiritual in man, is apt injuriously to affect some minds and lead them to a cold and selfish materialism. Because the influence of natural theories, propounded with every assurance, is for the most part hidden in its effects on men's minds, we are not therefore to ignore it. How far this is helped by the apathy of the Churches and their strifes with each other, it is impossible to determine. People of a sceptical turn of mind are apt to believe that that religion cannot be true which exhibits itself in so many antagonistic factions, each fighting for the mastery, and each proclaiming its own superiority to the others. Were the Christian denominations of this country to exhibit more unity, and to study more profoundly those great questions of the relations of the outward to the invisible world—of reason to faith—which are so agitating the minds of many in the present age, certain it is that they would have more weight in checking the spread of scepti-

cism, and that they would be a source of strength instead of weakness to each other.

But besides a speculative, there is also a practical, infidelity that keeps many aloof from the membership of the visible Church. Scepticism is often a thing more of the heart than of the head. Men's religious views often spring from their conduct, instead of their conduct from their creed. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God"—often, because his iniquitous life has made him wish it so. These people are not much affected by infidel theories, except so far as they find in them a corroboration of the scepticism of their heart. They are, perhaps, profoundly ignorant of many of the sceptical speculations around them, and yet they are none the less unbelievers, living so long amid the shadows that they are fain to take them for the substance. With this class, the difficulty is not so much to convince their minds as to remove the prejudices which warp their hearts.

Then, again, there is a large class, embracing also some of those last mentioned, that are kept outside the Churches by the degrading and often immoral literature with which their minds and hearts are constantly steeped. The influence of degrading literature is one of the most subtle and dangerous anti-Christian influences with which the Churches have to deal. Its cheapness brings it within the reach of the poorest; its corruptions fascinate the

natural heart. Much of the literature that circulates among the classes referred to, especially in the lower ranks of life, is not only degrading but communistic in its tendency, calculated to do away with all moral restraints and to open the flood-gates of revolution and impiety. All who have taken the trouble to inform themselves of the extent and influence of this anti-religious force have reason to dread its baneful effects. The zeal of its agents is equal to their effrontery. At the very gates of the General Assemblies, a shop has been opened for the sale of materialistic and other anti-religious literature, as if in defiance of the Churches. Atheism holds up its head in society, maintaining a literature to advocate its claims. The Churches and infidelity are now brought face to face, and the battle that shall decide the victory on the one side or on the other must soon be fought.

These are some of the anti-religious forces that are weakening the Church of Christ by keeping many outside of it who might be its ornament and strength. What is the reason, then, why amid so much ecclesiastical activity and so great extension of Christian agencies, this multiform scepticism is one of the chief anti-Christian forces of the present age, and why all the work of the Churches is hardly touching the spring of its life?

One reason may be, as already hinted, the want of concert which distinguishes the action of the present-

day religious sects. Each battalion of the Christian army is fighting for its own hand, and so fails to make any impression on the common enemy. In union, they would have been strong, and their unity would have proved to the outside world the oneness of the Christian faith; disunited, they become a subject of reproach to the professors of unbelief. Another reason is, that the Churches have not availed themselves as they might of a powerful weapon ready to their hand. A widely diffused irreligious literature has been the bane; an equally well-diffused religious literature should be the antidote. Much, no doubt, has been done by a religious press to counteract the effect of an irreligious literature, but, have the Churches taken the advantage of their high position and grand organisation to second a religious press that they should? It is to be feared they have not. Of the abounding Christian agencies, how few have been instituted with the express purpose of counteracting the effects of a low and immoral literature! Why should not every congregation have its pure literature agency, as well as its missionary or temperance agency? Or, why should not its accredited missionary agents have a commission to disseminate, wherever their operations extend, those literary productions directly written to counteract the influence of the degrading literature so widely diffused? The latter finds its way by its natural attraction for the depraved heart on the prin-

inciple of supply and demand; but that which shall supply a counteracting influence being uncongenial to such a heart requires a special agency to disseminate it. There exists in some quarters a colporteur agency partly for this purpose, limited, however, in its operations, and chiefly working in the rural districts. But this might well be so enlarged and extended as to be co-ordinate with missionary operations under each of the kirk-sessions of the town parishes. The agents required for such a work would need to be men of some education, able to grapple with the strong forces of irreligious literature that keep many from receiving the truth.

But an agency like this would reach only one class of sceptics—those who have generally little power of original thinking, and who are influenced by the shallow or immoral literature of the age. But what of men of a higher range of thought—men who are above all temptation to what is low and degrading, who have thought out their theories for themselves, and are ready to maintain them against all comers? Has the Church no weapon wherewith she may successfully contend with these? She has in her hands the weapon of truth. If she has not this, she is utterly useless either for attack or defence. Now, truth, if properly presented, is calculated in the end to prevail over error—must, indeed, finally prevail. Furnished with this weapon, the Churches stand on a high vantage-ground in their

contest with error, even though the latter is congenial to the natural heart. But the force of truth depends partly on the manner of its presentation, and partly on the nature of the organisation formed to propagate it. The Church—each separate section of the visible Church—is a large combination of those who in the great essentials of religion believe very much alike. It has a series of agencies for doing its work. It can lay hold of a number of forces, both material and spiritual, for this purpose. One of the Church's grand agents for propagating the truth is, the pulpit; another is, the press. It is not correct to say that the pulpit in the present age has lost its power. It would be nearer the truth to say that it has failed to put forth all the power it possesses for combating unbelief. The Church needs to give herself to a more vigorous and more thorough study of those scientific problems, and their relation to revealed truth, which are exercising the minds of so many in the present age. It is useless, it is fatal, to ignore them. All those materialistic and philosophic theories which attempt to strike at the root of divine revelation, must be met even in the pulpit, and refuted. The evidences for the Christian faith require to be considered anew in reference to the scientific and other objections of the present age. Geology, biology, chronology, and antiquarian discoveries in the East, have all a most intimate bearing on Bible truth, and ought to be carefully con-

sidered by the Church in their bearing upon it. The Church of former generations grappled manfully with the sceptics of the day, and that of the present day is all the stronger for the battles that were then fought and won. There should be learning enough in all the Churches now to maintain the truth of God against all comers. But to do this aright—to enable their ministers to keep abreast of the scientific theories and discoveries of the present day—we require a special branch of instruction in our Divinity Halls. Chairs for instruction in the relations of science to theology are absolutely required, if our ministers are to hold their own in the battle for truth. In addition to this, public lectureships for the delivery of popular lectures to counteract the sceptical scientific views of the day are very much needed. The subject is one which is stirring the most active minds of the present day, and the pulpit will lose its power if it does not faithfully and successfully grapple with it.

But besides the pulpit, the Church is furnished with another weapon—the press—for fighting the battle of truth. So far as concerns the counteractives to degrading, immoral, and communistic literature, its influence has been already considered. Not a little has been already done in the way of combating sceptical, scientific, and philosophic theories by the learned of the Church of Scotland and other Churches, but much yet remains to be done. There is no one

who has gained higher laurels in this field than Professor Flint in his two volumes of Baird Lectures, entitled 'Theism' and 'Anti-Theistic Theories.' Had the Baird Trust done no more good than promoting and publishing these lectures, it would have done an invaluable service to religion in the present day. With a simplicity and clearness of style that makes his reasoning plain to almost the meanest capacity, the writer shows himself thoroughly at home in the wide range of present-day philosophic and scientific inquiries. He treats his opponents with the utmost fairness, but overturns their theories with incontrovertible arguments. Those who have carefully read these volumes will have no fear of the result in the battle of orthodoxy against scepticism. But we need other similar defenders,—defenders who will battle with each new sceptical theory as it shows itself in the advance of scientific discovery. With the reproduction of many of the old worn-out arguments against Christianity, there is ever and anon some new rampart raised from which it is assailed. We cannot depend, therefore, on the grand defences of the Christian religion erected in a former age. Some of them are, indeed, permanent—as effectual now as ever. But, while keeping these in the foreground, the Church requires to adapt herself to those methods of attack which the ever-varying forms of scepticism in the present day presents. In doing this fearlessly

and faithfully—in summoning to her aid the highest sanctified talent, and encouraging the most learned of her sons to enter the arena of contest, she will be doing her duty to her Divine Head, and must at length prevail.

CHAPTER XI.

CONCLUSION—SUMMARY AND APPEAL.

I SHALL now, in this concluding chapter, gather together and present in as brief a space as possible the chief points and arguments of the previous chapters, in order to found on these an appeal to professing Christians and the Christian Church at large. The Church is an organisation, not only for edifying the body of believers of whom its membership is composed, but also for gathering the Churchless into its fold. For this purpose, it is supplied with a most potent instrument—viz., the Gospel of truth; and it is the object of the Church to supply the best possible organisation for manifesting the truth to the hearts and consciences of men. A hard-and-fast system of Church government and worship, such as belonged to the exclusive and temporary Jewish economy, would not suit the propagation of a religion that is to exist through all time and become the common religion of all mankind. Hence, in the New Testament, while the principles of all Church government and organisa-

tion are clearly laid down as those on which all the branches of the Church of Christ are to be founded, there is a large scope given in the carrying out of details and adapting Church organisations to the wants and conditions of men in every age. The positive rites laid down and commanded are few and simple; principles take the place, for the most part, of commanded outward observances. Hence, there is large room for sanctified human wisdom in devising such ecclesiastical organisations as shall be best suited to the functions of a Christian Church in the age in which it is established and the ages through which it is to extend. That Church is nearest to the divine ideal which can best fulfil the twofold function of a Church of Christ, already mentioned — viz., the edifying of the body of believers within, and making the most successful inroads on the kingdom of darkness without. True, all ecclesiastical organisations savour more or less of human imperfection, being more or less the work of imperfect human instruments; but it has pleased God in all ages to manifest His truth, not through angels, but through fallible and imperfect men—all but the Son of God Himself. This very fact, instead of creating a feeling of narrowness and bigotry among the ministers and members of the different sections of the Church, ought to gender a spirit of humility and brotherliness and toleration, and also of mutual help. No one of the several Churches, so far as I can see, can claim exclu-

sive divine sanction, nor has exclusive responsibility for bringing in the Churchless. The Church of Scotland as an Established Church, with her settled endowments and legal territorial divisions, which she has the power of multiplying at will, has the best means of fulfilling this responsibility, and consequently, the highest obligation, to extend the blessings of religion to the lapsed. The best human organisation, as has been attempted to be shown in an early part of this publication, is *endowed territorial work*—the minister working within a well-defined territory, limited in extent and population, in those districts where the Churchless most abound—that minister raised by sufficient endowment above worldly distractions, able to give his whole time and attention to his parish, accountable for the oversight of his whole territory, and by his labours among the neglected poor, constituting himself their friend and pastor and bringing them into church-going habits. Unestablished Churches may set on foot an organisation of this kind, and in not a few cases have done excellent work among the Churchless poor, but to do this, they labour under serious difficulties and disadvantages compared with the Established Church.

Along with the labours of the minister in this endowed territory, there is required a variety of subordinate agencies, if possible under his direction and that of his kirk-session, all having the same object of helping to raise the fallen—to bring the Churchless

under the influence of religion, and to unite them to some branch of the visible Church. Those subordinate agencies, having been already specified, need not further be alluded to here. They are not the exclusive property of any branch of the Church of Christ, but in the great work of reclaiming the Churchless, may be employed with profit by all.

It has been further shown that the work of bringing in the Churchless is one that cannot possibly be done by any one branch of the Church of Christ in the present divided state of the Churches. The Church of Scotland, being possessed of certain advantages, may do much, but cannot do all. It is, therefore, her duty and her privilege to ask others to unite with her in this work on principles which experience has shown to be most effectual; and since there is scope for the labours of all, the spiritually destitute districts may be so divided that each branch of the Church willing to co-operate may have an assigned territory, so that in its working it may not interfere with the action of the others, and all may work in healthy rivalry for the same end. It is surely far better that the Churchless should be gathered into the fold of some rival denomination, than that they should remain outside of all the Churches. But it may be said that, constituted as the Churches now are, this scheme is but a pious imagination. Great changes in the spirit of some of their rulers, greater unity of purpose, and deeper sense of responsibility,

must ensue ere such a consummation can be reached. Granted ; but surely the language of hope, the endeavour to point out their interest and their duty to their Great Head, are more likely to bring about that co-operation of the Churches than the language of uncharitableness and despair. The day may seem distant—that day so much desired by all true Christians—when the Churches, laying aside their jealousies and antipathies, shall be found working side by side for the great object here pleaded for, and so fulfilling one of the great ends of their existence ; but every attempt to show the unreasonableness of their standing aloof, and to point out the methods by which an approachment may take place, will surely be helping it on. Great changes in human opinion often take place, or appear to take place, suddenly, and we live in an age when, by reason of the opportunities afforded for the interchange of opinion, great impulses are easily communicated from the centre to the circumference of society. The present revived interest in the problem of the amelioration of the lapsed and poor is sufficient to inspire a hope that the Churches will be brought more into accord in doing their part to work it out.

Common action on the part of the Churches will necessitate a common organisation—the formation of one great association, if not for the country at large, at least for each of the larger towns, for the gathering of funds to be applied in stimulating the work to

be done by each of the associated Churches. Union in action will give strength, and will help to smooth all asperities. Let there be a truce in the face of the common enemy to all sectarian jealousies; let the harsh cry of Disestablishment be hushed in the presence of this scandal and danger to all the Churches; and let all who regard the interests of Christ's truth above sectarian and selfish interests combine in the work, and there will be far more chance of an eventual external union than there ever will be amid the upheavings of an ecclesiastical revolution. "There can be no question that the awful spiritual destitution which all lament is traceable in great part to the sad disunion in the Presbyterian Church. It is therefore the duty of each portion of it very seriously to inquire, not, as has been hitherto too much the custom, how far other Churches are to blame for this, but how far itself has been to blame. There can be as little question that the true road to union lies, not in discussing the respective theories of each denomination, but in active and immediate endeavour to grapple with and to remedy that destitution."—Dr Scott's *Endowed Territorial Work*, p. 7.

The need of this hearty co-operation in home missionary work is, therefore, great; in fact, imperative, when we consider the condition of a large number of the Churchless as already faintly described. But pen cannot describe, nor imagination conceive the stern

reality. Were a voice to be given to the woes and vices and wrongs of the miserable thousands that crowd our slums and fever-dens, it would startle us all. By an unpardonable laxity on the part of successive Governments, multitudes of human beings have been allowed to be crowded together under conditions which make health, comfort, freedom from debasing vices, impossible. And, as if this were not enough, the poorest districts have been allowed to be planted thick with public-houses and spirit-shops, as a continual source of temptation to the poor. The State draws a large revenue from the vices of those it has made so miserable. The cry of philanthropy to shut up those houses which grow rich on the vices of the poor has long been unheeded. Those who have gone down into those depths of spiritual destitution to fight the demon drink, have had to encounter him weighted with the obstacles which the State has allowed to the drunkard's reformation. The Churches have had to fight a losing battle with the wretched and depraved, because the State has not done its duty in removing temptations out of the way. Here and there, Christianising agencies have rescued the degraded, but the many temptations placed in the poor man's way by the wretchedness of his dwelling and the multiplication of whisky-shops, has given the victory in the race too often to vice and irreligion. There is, perhaps, no vice so hard to cure as intemperance, especially where temptations

to it abound. The only chance, almost, for the drunkard is to remove those temptations out of the way and allow spiritual agencies to do their work ; but how many are the chances against him when day by day he has to pass scenes of temptation, in the shape of public-houses, where his craving appetite has been formerly indulged ! “ I could get my Bill,” said a poor heart-broken working man’s wife, ‘ past one public, but oh, sir, I can’t get him past ten ! ” Never will the State become alive to its duty to remove these temptations out of the poor man’s way, till the great heart of the country beat true, and public opinion, arising like a hurricane, shall compel Government and Parliament to sweep this nuisance from the earth.

Nor less needed is the action of the State in preventing overcrowding as a cause of much of the demoralisation of the poor, and in compelling the owners and occupiers of such homes to make and keep them in a healthy and comfortable condition. The safety of the State, the wellbeing of the multitudes at the base of our social fabric, require that those causes which breed discontent and fever and many other evils, shall be removed. Talk of electoral rights, but it is surely the right of the poorest that the home which shelters him and in which he is to rear his family, shall be such as shall enable him to perform the duties of a citizen and have a chance in life. It is for the interest of the State, for the inter-

ests of society at large, that this should be seen to; just as it is that society should be protected from the reckless use of poisons, or the careless handling of explosives. It is surely cheaper, more humane, more Christian, to spend the money of the State, or exercise the power of the State, in preventing evil, than in paying for its effects—in diminishing temptations to crime than in punishing it. Every one raised out of these depths to become a useful and respected citizen is an advantage to the State; every one that, through the temptations placed in his way, is allowed to grow up in vice and crime, is a loss and weakness to the State. State aid is not here clamoured for in any matter in which the poor can help themselves. It is better far that they should rely upon themselves for much in the improvement of their condition. But, as already stated, the State may give aid for emigration to relieve the congested populations; it may encourage counteractive agencies, by lending money to municipalities, or legally constituted associations, at a moderate rate of interest, for improving the condition and raising the tone of the poor. It may give still larger encouragement to thrift and economy; and something, perhaps, in the way of training the mothers and daughters in the principles of plain cooking.

Let the State, then, take the obstacles to the social and moral elevation of the poorer classes out of the way; let it give the poor at least a chance of helping

themselves ; let it try preventive instead of punitive remedies ; let it call upon municipalities, on house-proprietors, on the poor themselves, to do their duty as to improving and keeping pure their now miserable dwellings ; and then, when all secular agents have done their duty, let it summon the Churches—the Church as Established and the others that are willing to lend a helping hand—to use every spiritual appliance at their command, that all the forces material and spiritual may be arrayed in this crusade against the kingdom of darkness. Here would be a union of Church and State to which only the very bigoted could make objections.

These improvements, if they do come, as I humbly conceive they must, will require time to mature and carry out. But what about the present state of matters ? Is it to be allowed to continue till public opinion become ripe for some great movement ? Public opinion, unless hurried on by some universal impulse, is slow to move. For generations back, the State as well as the Church has stood face to face with this mighty problem, and with the honourable exceptions already referred to, has given little serious consideration to it. But now, thank God, it is coming to the front. Statesmen of the front rank are beginning to consider it from a political stand-point. Devoutly is it to be wished that this great social question may be kept aloof from the strifes of party. Since the former part of this treatise was written, the

Marquis of Salisbury in the House of Lords has intimated a motion for a Commission of inquiry into the subject. Yet this generation may pass away ere substantial remedies are provided; and, meanwhile, the evils of overcrowding, impure air, drunkenness, and miserable homes, when not at once remedied, are intensified. Souls are lost, lives are made useless and wretched, crimes are hatched, while the great upper world, busy with gain and enjoying the comforts of life, are leaving their wretched brothers and sisters alone. But, are the Churches in the meantime to do nothing because they cannot do everything? Surely not. None have so little excuse for being apathetic. Let them seek the wisest and most practical organisations; let them unite their forces; let them, if possible, double their agencies; and by their earnest working, even amid the hindrances to complete success that meet them on every side, they will have a stronger claim on the State to do its part. In fact, there are, or should be, no instruments more powerful than the Churches in forming a sound public opinion on this question. Let them use, then, the great power God has given them, till the conscience of the country is thoroughly roused, and Governments are no longer allowed to trifle with the problem—no longer to spend their time in strengthening and beautifying only the upper strata of the social fabric, while the base is left to rottenness and corruption.

This is a question in which, not the great towns only are interested, but the country districts as well. The true interests of all classes of society are indissolubly linked together. What affects one part of the community is sure in course of time to affect the other. When a poor crop is reaped, the disaster is felt throughout the towns as well as the rural districts in the dulness of trade; and when disasters fall upon the mines and manufactories—on those who, when in receipt of good wages, could command not only the necessaries, but also some of the luxuries of life—they are immediately felt in the country districts, in the slow demand for, and consequently the cheapening of, beef and other articles of country produce. So, in the solution of this problem, so nearly affecting great towns, the rural districts have a deep interest. The decennial census clearly proves that, as the towns and mining and manufacturing districts are increasing beyond the natural increase of the population, so the purely rural parishes are decreasing somewhat in a like ratio. If we except those that are drained out of the country by emigration—a comparatively small number—the rest are drawn into towns, often whole families; frequently, only the younger members. Now, what becomes of all those who are pouring healthy and vigorous from the country districts into the large towns? Some of them are fortunate in rising to good stations, and in founding comfortable, or even luxurious, homes.

Others, by a hard struggle, manage just to keep themselves afloat. But, there is a considerable number that, from want of work, family sickness, and some from intemperance, sink down and fall into the number of the lapsed populations, to fill up the gaps which vice and disease are constantly making in their unhealthy homes. Missionaries, Bible-women, and others, who have sounded those deeps, are often meeting with such instances—sad cases of those who have lost all hope in the struggle for existence, and have been condemned to live in hovels they would once have thought not good enough for their pigs. Many that are dwelling in their comfortable country homes have either friends or acquaintances thus reduced to poverty—once happy church-attenders, now among the lapsed; once healthy and comfortable, now diseased and miserable; but whether or not, all have surely hearts to feel the claims of their miserable fellow-men, and ears to hear their sighs and groans.

In this appeal to the Christian sympathies and Christian liberality of all the church-going classes in town and country, I do not leave out of account the great amount of individual benevolence and of individual labours among the classes whose claims are here advocated. There has seldom been an age distinguished by more genuine sacrifices and more interested services among a certain class in behalf of the poor than the present. Those who have occasion to visit the localities where they abound in

an official capacity have constant opportunities of witnessing the self-denying gratuitous labours of men and women who have given not only their money but themselves to the work of elevating the poor, whose names are household words in their wretched dwellings. These people are, indeed, the very salt of the earth.¹ But something more is required than individual and isolated effort. These self-sacrificing Christians, instead of being scattered units, hopelessly fighting the battle with godlessness and vice, should be but the vanguard of a great Christian army, of which each congregation is a regiment, and each individual member a soldier, going forth to the "help of the Lord against the mighty." But, the number of an army is nothing without discipline and organisation; and so it rests with the Churches to supply the needed organisation to those Christian forces, and afford to the benevolent and the self-sacrificing the proper channels through which the Christian activity may flow. The kingdom of darkness, as existing in the dens and slums of our large towns, cannot be successfully assailed without far more general effort and without the proper direction of that effort. But, let the Church without delay call out her volunteers and muster her hosts; let no dark spot remain unassailed, no master vice remain ungrappled with, and let there be no rest till each home of the poorest in

¹ See Appendix XIII.

the land be not only a comfortable, but a Christian home. Let there, in fine, be a great and earnest call on the part of all the Churches for the Spirit of the living God to descend in the plenitude of His power to awaken in every Christian heart a genuine interest in our great Home Mission—to breathe life into every organisation for carrying on this campaign against the powers of darkness; and success, though now apparently far distant, will be eventually sure. Then “God, even our God, shall bless us, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.”

APPENDIX.

I.

IT is pretty clear, that in our largest towns, at least, church-building has not kept pace with the increase of the spiritual destitution. Without a very great deal of inquiry on the spot, it is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain anything like accurate statistics regarding the amount of religious destitution that exists, but an approximation to the truth will be a verification of the statement made in the text. Take, for example, Edinburgh and Leith. In eleven years, from 1871 to 1882, the population of the combined towns had increased by about 50,000, or at the rate of upwards of 4500 a-year. Allowing an average of 2000 of a population for every church and chapel built during those eleven years, there should have been twenty-five new churches built to absorb the whole increase of the population; but there were in reality only twenty-three of all denominations, some of them but small mission chapels, leaving at least 4000 unprovided for, without any farther room for accommodating the large numbers of the religiously destitute that had been accumulat-

ing for several generations. In the other large towns, Glasgow included, although there has, during the period referred to, been great activity in church-building, the accommodation of the churches added has, like the case of Edinburgh, hardly been sufficient for the rapidly increasing inhabitants, far less, for sensibly reducing the large spiritual destitution known previously to exist.

II.

As a corroboration of the statements in the text, the following graphic and melancholy extracts are given from a record of the experience of a city minister in volume i. of 'Life and Work,' page 26. After stating that he had been summoned late at night to visit the deathbed of a drunken mother, and graphically relating some of the scenes he witnessed on his way, of the public-houses having just turned out of their glaring saloons a ragged, wretched, maddened crowd of profane men and foul-mouthed women, laughing, cursing, weeping, or fighting, as the unclean spirit moved them, he adds, "I knew every one of the worn damp steps in the long stair, and soon found myself in the wretched home where the woman was dying. The room was nearly filled with people, and almost every one of them was saturated with strong drink. The bed on which the woman lay, and a wooden box beside the fireplace—for there was no fire—were all the furniture

in the house. The husband and father sat on the wooden box in the weeping stage of intoxication. Old withered women stood round the bed phrasing about religion. Sons and daughters, with the affection sinned out of them, stood apart trying to shed tears. The woman on the bed had reached, through a course of polluted womanhood and degraded motherhood, the reckoning of conscience and the fear of death. . . . I stood and held that blue cold hand till the life went out with the tide that bore it to the farther shore. . . . And where did the story that so sadly ended begin? It began thirty years before in a village in the county of Fife, when the gamekeeper's daughter was married to the coachman's son, and when the happy pair left for life in the city. The husband was to be coachman to an eminent physician, and the wife was to assist in the doctor's household. Their after-history was an illustration of the influence of strong drink. They had twelve children, and at the date of the mother's death, her husband was a third-rate cabman, and all her children were alive, and *not one of them doing well.*"

III.

Few more graphic and heartrending accounts of the effects of drink upon a man of talent and education, reducing him and his family to the condition of the lapsed populations, can be read than that given by Dr Guthrie in his 'Second Plea for Ragged

Schools.' "In the forenoon of a winter day," he says, "some years ago, I received a note urging me, if I wished to save his life, to hurry to the abode of the writer. I knew him. He was a man of talent, and had an uncommon knowledge of Scripture. After seeing a great deal of the world, he had returned to spend his days at home, possessed of what, with a little industry on his part, would amply suffice for the maintenance of his family. A prudent, tidy, sober, sensible wife, with two or three fine children, made up his domestic circle; and a sweeter happier home might not have been in all Edinburgh. But what availed these? He was a drunkard. On my first visit to his district, I found him a woe-begone wretch, sitting idle and gloomy in a foul apartment; his wife heartbroken, and he himself the terror of his children, who, clad in rags, waited on no ministry and went to no school. In the course of time, a very remarkable change was wrought on his home and habits. The wilderness had become an Eden, and the desert a garden of the Lord. And it was a pleasant sight to see that man on the Sabbath-day—his family beside him, roses blooming on their cheeks, and their rags changed for comfortable and becoming attire. I have often looked at him with wonder as he sat before the pulpit, drinking in the truth, his glistening eye fixed upon the speaker. His house was now comfortably and fully furnished. . . . Such had been the state of matters before I received this ominous note. It was with dark forebodings that I hastened to the house, and climbed five flights of stairs to the room where drunkenness and poverty had driven this

man, and where, though brighter days had dawned, he still resided. His poor wife—her eyes consumed with grief, with three children clinging in terror to the mother, was the first sight that met me. She put her finger on her lips, and led me into a neighbour's room. There I heard all. He had been mad with drink for several days. Trembling for her own and her children's lives, she had to seek an asylum beneath a kind neighbour's roof. The door of his room was bolted, but he opened it when I knocked and announced my name. What a scene was there! No furniture, no bedding; the fire quenched on the hearth; the very grate removed from the cold black chimney—all sold for drink. And, amid this desolation stood the man himself that cold winter day, without coat or vest or stockings—the sleeve of his shirt rolled up to the shoulder and a large knife in his hand. He had resolved on suicide, but stood uncertain how to leave the scene; whether by the knife, or by the window thrown up for the dreadful leap, or by a rope and noose that hung ominous and frightful from a post of the bedstead. I dealt as best I could with this ominous and troubled spirit. His conscience was again awakened. Affection to his wife and children resumed its sway. He threw himself at her feet. He kissed his little ones, and accused himself of being the veriest and vilest wretch on earth. The scene, which would have melted a heart of stone, afforded some hope that, from the new struggle with an old enemy, he might at length come off victorious, earning the blessing of his family and the praise of Him who hath said—'He that ruleth his own spirit is better than he that taketh a city.' Alas! his

goodness was like the morning cloud ; and by-and-by he abandoned his home, adding another to the vast number of miserable families which have been deserted by their natural protectors. In time, he was forgotten as a man out of mind. Yet we met again. Engaged one day in visiting in the Grassmarket, I entered a low lodging-house, kept by an Irishwoman. While conversing with some of her countrymen, the mistress said that a lodger in the back room wished to see me. She lighted a candle, and stooping, followed by me, she entered a low, long, dark, narrow apartment, with beds as thick as they could be placed, ranged on each side. She stopped by a bed on which, under a dirty coverlet that was drawn over the face, lay a human form like a corpse beneath the shroud. A heavy sigh was the only answer to the question, 'Who wishes to see me?' The face was at length uncovered, and the light of the candle fell on the haggard death-stamped features of the wretched man who once seemed to have been saved. I was shocked at the sight, and shall never forget his piteous tone and despairing look as he asked, 'Is it possible, sir, after all, I can be saved?'"

IV.

"Little do many know what misery, what bitter homes, what biting cold, what brutal usage, is summed up in its (the street Arab's) short experience. This elflike creature, whose infancy was neither cradled nor caressed, that stands here with naked feet and

tangled locks and ‘uncouth features, and meagre, pale, and wild,’ has suffered day by day the most brutal usage—usage such as, if inflicted on child, brother, or sister of yours or mine, would stir the very depths of passion, and make our eyes flash with angry fires. What mothers they have! One night the street along which I walked was suddenly filled with loud piercing shrieks. A poor starved-like boy, whose mother was going with her paramour to drink, had followed her, remonstrating with her. She turned on him like a wild beast. I found her beating him most savagely. And I well remember with what rage, when I had thrust myself between them, and flung her back, she turned on me to justify her brutality, alleging, that as the child was hers, she might treat him as she liked.” — Dr Guthrie’s ‘Second Plea for Ragged Schools.’

“It was an awful thing to see a mother, who hung over a sick boy’s couch and fondly kissed him, drop on her knees and passionately pray to God that he might never rise from that bed, but die—die there. No wonder. Eleven summers had gone over that young head, yet life had been all winter to him. He had been starved by a drunken father; forced on the street; forced into crime. None of those who went to church wrapped up in comforts, Bible or prayer-book in hand, had cared for him, poor wretch. He had to steal or starve, do wrong or die. And, seeing no prospect for him but the cold hands of the hangman working about that young neck, what wonder that his mother wished him dead, willing rather to trust him to the mercy of God than to what they call the justice of man. Think of the miseries that wrung

such prayers from a mother's lips, and hasten to our help; it is 'the help of the Lord against the mighty.'" —Dr Guthrie's 'Third Plea for Ragged Schools.'

See also quotations from Appendix to 'Rising Tide,' in Appendix VI.

V.

Intemperance.—When will the influential and well-to-do classes discern the penalty we pay for allowing the temptations to intoxicating drinks? When will sober Christian professors learn, that, what they think to be a harmless luxury to themselves, is the cause of the most awful calamities from which the country has ever suffered—of untold misery to hundreds and thousands of our countrymen—our own flesh and blood—of the ruin of their body and soul for time and for eternity—a ruin for which all the sober and the respectable are in some degree responsible? There is hardly an evil from which the lapsed populations of our country suffer but may be traced directly or indirectly to intemperance. (1) It is the cause of the most of our crime. "I believe," says Justice Mellor, "that nine-tenths of the crime in this country is engendered inside the doors of public-houses." "But for drink," said the Lord Chief-Justice of England, "we might shut up nine out of ten of our gaols." Mr Justice Denman mentions that, "on one occasion, in a northern county, he sat to try a calendar of 63 prisoners, out of which 36 were charged with crimes

of violence, from murder downwards, there being no less than 6 murderers for trial among those 36. In every single case, not indirectly but directly, those offences were attributed to excessive drinking." For two or three years back, the 'Alliance News' has culled from neutral newspapers throughout England the list of murders, assaults, casualties, and every other kind of crime or calamity caused directly by intoxicating drink during the last week of the old year and the first of the new. This year, it has given 52 columns of such. In these black lists are included 74 assaults on women through drink, 70 assaults on constables, 94 deaths, 18 cases of suicide attempted, 15 cases of suicide completed, and 12 manslaughters or murders. A ghastly list truly! but the murders and the wife-beatings and the assaults still go on, and they produce but a mere ripple on the wave of public opinion. (2) Drunkenness is the fosterer of some of the most common and terrible forms of disease. We have the high authority of Dr Norman Kerr for the statement that, out of 1540 cases of gout, only one was in the person of a total abstainer from wine, and he inherited the disease from his wine-loving ancestors. To drink, also, he says he has been able to trace three-fourths of all his cases of heart disease; and nine out of ten cases of paralysis he has been able to trace directly or indirectly to intoxicating drink. (3) It is the cause of the greater part of our lunacy. "In the last 20 years," says Mr Hoyle, "our lunacy has doubled." "Out of 300 idiots whose family history was carefully examined, 145—nearly half—were the children of habitual drunkards; and in one case, where both

parents were drunkards, no less than seven children were born idiots." "60 out of every 100," says Lord Shaftesbury, for sixteen years chairman of the Commission in Lunacy, "come to these asylums directly through drink." (4) Besides being the cause of a large proportion of our pauperism, drunkenness is responsible directly or indirectly for at least 120,000 deaths per annum throughout Britain, of which 49,700 are caused directly, the remainder from accident, violence, starvation, or disease, caused from the intemperance of others. (5) Intoxicating drinks, in their production and consumption, and in the losses direct and indirect caused by them, involve a loss to the nation of nearly £250,000,000 per annum. "I have shown," says Mr William Hoyle, the most eminent, perhaps, of living authorities, "that, during the last 50 years, we, as a nation, by our drinking habits, have wasted upwards of thirteen thousand millions of pounds sterling—an amount of wealth as great, and half as great again, as the total wealth of the United Kingdom. And, what has been the return for this payment? Social demoralisation has been engendered, disease and premature deaths have largely been caused, whilst morality, religion, education, have been obstructed and frequently blasted. If the nation, priding itself upon its high Christian character, its intelligence, and great common-sense, had paid this sum to be saved from these evils, it would have been praiseworthy conduct; but to buy them, and at such a price, is conduct that is so irrational as to be incredible, were it not manifest before our eyes."

It is true that, during the past ten years, the con-

sumption of wine and spirits has sensibly diminished within the United Kingdom—a fact that cannot but be gratifying, so far as it goes, because it is due, in a considerable measure, to the agitation of temperance reformers; but the diminution rather represents the result of total abstinence on the part of many in the middle and upper ranks of life, than an improvement in the habits of the poor, though, among many of them, also, it is pleasing to note, total abstinence has taken root. One of the most deplorable aspects of the vice of intemperance, is that so many of its victims are women. In an eloquent sermon on intemperance by Archdeacon Farrar, entitled, ‘A Nation’s Curse,’ he states that in four hours in one city, 36,803 women were seen going into public-houses. In Edinburgh, it is stated, the arrests of women for drunkenness in 1877 showed an increase of 43 per cent as compared with 1871. With all that has been done among the poor and lapsed classes in the way of temperance reformation, the effects of drunkenness among the classes inhabiting the wretched dwellings of our crowded alleys are simply appalling. “If you would know,” says the Venerable Archdeacon Govett, from whose pamphlet, entitled ‘Strong Drink and its Results,’ I have quoted a good many of the facts above set forth,—“If you would know what drinking habits bring, go into the courts and alleys of our great cities; go, see whole populations, men, women, and children, with faces bloated, sodden, brutalised, savage, and but half human. See women, or creatures that had once been women, shrieking, fighting, blaspheming, pawning the shawls off their backs, and the very bed on which

their children lie,—poor, ragged, emaciated, lost to health, lost to respectability, lost to shame. Or, follow that man just reeling from the gin-palace. Witness the squalid misery of that bare, foul room, which, but for drink, might have been a happy cottage home; see his children, as they hear his step on the stairs, fly from him terror-stricken, and huddle away out of sight in the corner, in the street, anywhere; look at that poor, frightened, shuddering wife! Hark! hear you that cry? But, great God! the picture is too horrible. What then the reality? . . . And, had you seen these scenes with your own eyes, your heart, however strong, would sink within you, at this widespread, terrific misery, this eating canker of our country's life."

VI.

Miseries of Overcrowding.—In an address delivered several years ago on 'How to bring the Gospel before the Masses of London,' Lord Shaftesbury says: "I maintain that the grand and leading mischief is the domiciliary condition of large masses of the people of London. I have seen as many as twenty persons living in a single room; and, is it possible, I ask, when such cases not only exist but abound, to institute purity of life, of thought, of action, or observe any of the demands of domestic duty? This is the besetting evil that surrounds us all; this is the great and overwhelming mischief that is bringing corrup-

tion on the populations, which is one great cause of that which is the main curse of our country—those habits of drinking and inebriety. The filthy physical state, the depression of the nervous system, the misery brought on by that mode of life, drive people to find artificial stimulants in the beer-houses and the gin-shops.”

The following extracts are from the published records of those who have personally examined into the condition of the poorest classes in our large cities, it being premised that, though not many such extreme cases are now found as some of those here referred to, yet, in the densest and most squalid quarters they are still met with in our largest towns. They are here given as pictures of the home-life of the inhabitants, whom penury or vice has driven to inhabit the worst of our city slums. (1) From letters in the ‘Daily Mail,’ by that paper’s special correspondent, published some years ago, and quoted in Appendix to ‘Rising Tide, and how to Stem it,’ by Rev. James Johnston, Free St James’ Church, Glasgow. “Men and women alike are here living in a most wretched condition of squalor, and what is most pitiable of all is to see young children of every age, from the sucking infant to the child of six, huddled up on the damp cold floors of these miserable habitations. Many of these children are quite dwarfed, and attenuated to mere skeletons; their crooked limbs and wasted and little claw-like hands all combine to give them a weird appearance which is both painful and touching to look upon. . . . One house which we visited was inhabited by a very decent-looking Irishwoman and her family. Her husband

worked at the wharf during the day, and she took in washing. She lived in one of the two-storeyed houses containing one apartment. This apartment was also overcrowded, but the inmates consisted exclusively of the woman's own family. The atmosphere was very close and oppressive, and on asking her why she did not keep a little of her window open, she said, she dare not open it for the stench that would come from outside. We asked her if she enjoyed good health. 'Oh yes,' said she, 'but the children are sometimes bad, and I lost a fine little girl last year from a kind of decline. She was always sick, and when the scavengers came, she used to take very bad.' We asked her, 'Did she not find any evil results from the cleansing of the middens?' 'Well, surs,' says she, 'it isn't pleasant, and it sometimes takes my heart. But, thank God! although it's twice a-day, he doesn't come at meal-times.' "

(2) The following quotations as to overcrowding are from reports of missionary operations in New Greyfriars' Parish, Edinburgh, during the incumbency of the late Dr Robertson. In one of the excellent reports of the minister of the Working Man's Church, Grassmarket, it is stated, "Very great improvements have been effected on the parish by the various benevolent evangelising schemes which have for many years been in operation in connection with the New Greyfriars' congregation, and much good has been done by the demolition of many miserable dwellings. Still, both the moral and physical condition of many inhabitants of the Grassmarket is bad enough. Very many families have only one apartment, and many dwellings are damp, dark, filthy, and excessively

crowded. . . . The following brief extract from my note-book refers to a quarter by no means so bad as others: 'Short stair; only six families; thin, rickety partitions and floors; no ceiling. Room No. 1—Garret, barely high enough to stand in highest part; no furniture, but a loathsome-looking bed, covered with a few rags; floor so littered with cinders, straw, and moist filth, that shovel would be needed to clean it; tenant, a widow, with sister and eight children, fourteen years and under; . . . two of them, three and five years old, without a shred of clothing; mother out washing all day, and her sister drunk in bed with the baby; about 60 feet of air to each individual. . . . No. 6—All available space crowded with wretched beds; widow and daughter keep promiscuous lodging-house of indescribable character.'

According to the census of 1881, 41 per cent of the families in Glasgow, and about 25 per cent of those in Aberdeen, were living in houses of one room, —facts which speak volumes, especially in the former case, of the evils of overcrowding!

VII.

Want of Remunerative Work.—The grinding and slavish work of many poor families and individual sempstresses and others to obtain the barest necessities of life is very graphically pictured in that thrilling pamphlet, which has directed so much attention to the problem we are considering, 'The Bitter

Cry of Outcast London,' recently published. "A child seven years old is known easily to make 10s. 6d. a-week by thieving, but, what can he earn by such work as match-box making, for which $2\frac{1}{4}$ d. a gross is paid, the maker having to find his own fire for drying the boxes, and his own paste and string? Before he can gain as much as the young thief, he must make 56 gross of match-boxes a-week, or 1296 a-day. It is needless to say that this is impossible, for even adults can rarely make more than an average of half that number. How long, then, must the little hands toil before they can earn the price of the scantiest meal? Women, for the work of trousers' finishing (*i.e.*, sewing in linings, making button-holes, and stitching on the buttons), receive $2\frac{1}{2}$ d. a pair, and have to find their own thread. We ask a woman who is making tweed trousers how much she can earn in a day, and are told, one shilling. But what does a day mean to this poor soul? *Seventeen hours.* From five in the morning to ten at night—no pause for meals. She eats her crust and drinks a little tea as she works, making in very truth with her needle and thread, not her living only but her shroud. For making men's shirts, these women are paid 10d. per dozen; lawn-tennis aprons, 3d. a dozen; and babies' hoods, from 1s. 6d. to 2s. a dozen. In St George's-in-the-East, large numbers of women and children, some of the latter only seven years old, are employed in sack-making, for which they get a farthing each. In one house was found a widow and her half-idiot daughter making palliasses at $1\frac{3}{4}$ d. each. Here is a woman who has a sick husband and a little child to look after. She is employed at shirt-finishing at 3d.

a dozen, and by the utmost effort can only earn 6d. a-day, out of which she has to find her own thread. . . . With men, it is, comparatively speaking, no better. ‘My master,’ says one man visited by a recent writer in the ‘Fortnightly Review,’ gets a pound for what he gives me 3s. for making.’”

“‘My mother and myself and eldest child, who is lame,’ said a match-box maker to a London visitor, ‘can only make six gross a-day, which, at $1\frac{1}{2}$ d., is $7\frac{1}{2}$ d., out of which we have to find paste and hemp, and firing to dry them when finished: but, God knows, it is but little firing we can have; as you see, we have none to-day. We have to pay 1s. 6d. per week rent. It is not living, sir—it is starving. The children can’t go to school, even if their clothing would permit, because they must earn a few pence at home.’”—From ‘Forty Years’ Mission Work among the Outcast Poor of London.’

VIII.

Artisans’ Dwellings Act.—The preamble of this Act sets forth, that in various portions of our cities and burghs, the buildings are so densely inhabited as to be injurious to the moral and physical welfare of the inhabitants—that, in consequence of the want of light, air, ventilation, and proper conveniences, fevers and diseases are generated, and that the several houses, or courts, or alleys often belong to several owners, whereby one owner cannot make those altera-

tions that are needful for the public health,—that the public health requires many such places to be pulled down and reconstructed, and that, in connection with this reconstruction, it is expedient that provision be made for the dwellings of the working classes who may be displaced in consequence thereof. The Act applies only to royal and parliamentary burghs in Scotland having a population of 25,000 or upwards. If two justices or twelve ratepayers complain, the local authority's medical officer must examine and report whether in his opinion it is, or is not, an unhealthy area. If satisfied of the truth of this representation, and of the sufficiency of their resources, the local authority shall pass a resolution that it is an unhealthy area, and forthwith proceed to make a scheme for its improvement. It must in this scheme make provision for the accommodation of at least as many of the working classes as may be displaced, in suitable dwellings within the same area, or vicinity thereof. The scheme may be carried out by the owner, or with the concurrence of the owner, of any property therein, under the superintendence and control of the local authority upon such terms as may be agreed on. Notices have to be served on the owners, and petition for confirmation has to be laid before the Secretary of State. The latter, if he approves, directs a local inquiry, and on report, may make such modifications as he thinks fit, except that no additional land be taken. The provisional order must be sanctioned by Parliament. Provision has to be made for costs properly incurred by the owners of lands compulsorily taken. If the local authority fail or refuse to pass an improvement scheme, the Secretary of State may make

inquiry on official representation to them by their medical officer of health. The remaining provisions of this Act have reference to details in working out the scheme. From this very brief abstract of it, it will be seen that it is a scheme calculated to be of the greatest practical benefit to large towns; but that its initiation may be tedious, and the practical difficulties connected with it considerable.

IX.

The suggestion of Dr Guthrie referred to in the text is found in Appendix to 'The City: its Sins and Sorrows,' and is as follows: "The interest of the dram-seller lies in inducing them (the drinkers) to become frequent and regular customers of his shop. The more they drink, the worse for their families, but the better for him. . . . As the drunkard is held responsible for all that he does in a state of drunkenness, the law should declare that the keeper of the drinking-shop, within which he got drink, shall share in his responsibility. No man can have a right, for the sake of money, to convert another into a madman, and having turned him out on society, to say of whatever offence in his madness he commits, 'My hands are clean.' It is strange to see how society stands by and allows so many to waste their life, their wages, their substance, on drink, and thereby throw the burden of maintaining their families on

the sober and industrious part of the community. . . .
Virtue with us is taxed to support vice."

X.

Ragged Schools.—The Ragged School Union of London for the institution and support of Ragged Schools was instituted in 1844, just forty years ago. At the time it was started, it was calculated that there were in London more than 100,000 youths of both sexes growing up untaught and uncared for. The object of the Union was to give such youths some knowledge of the commonest principles of morality and religion. "Some few years since, it was ascertained, as the result of careful inquiry, that more than 300,000 children had been taken off the streets of London, and put in the way of earning an honest livelihood, who, but for the Ragged Schools, would have sunk into the ranks of those who in Paris are called the dangerous classes."—See 'The Dens of London; or, Forty Years' Mission Work among the Outcast Poor of London.' The following testimony of Lord Shaftesbury, who from the first was appointed president of the Union, comes with all the weight of his long services to the cause of humanity, and of his high and noble character: "Having known and watched the Ragged Schools from their very beginning, and having, during many years, devoted days and nights to the advancement of their interests, I conscientiously assert that I believe

their existence in full vigour to be, in the strongest sense of the words, absolutely essential to the saving from sin and misery tens of thousands of children at present in the most degraded and unhappy condition."

The recommendations of the Commission on Reformatories and Industrial Schools, in their report to Parliament recently issued, would so far obviate the objections stated in the text to Industrial Schools; but entirely voluntary institutions, like Ragged Schools, paid, if possible, by Parliament for educational results, appear to be the only agencies capable of effecting a thorough reformation of the young brought up in the slums.

XI.

Co-operative Stores for the Poor.—A few facts regarding one of the most successful of the working men's co-operative stores—viz., that established at Rochdale, England—may be of interest to the reader. It originated in 1844, during a time of depression in trade, with twenty-eight poor weavers, who met and formed themselves into a society for turning their hard-made earnings to the most profitable use. They had agreed to club together and purchase some of the necessaries of life at wholesale prices, and then sell them at the retail prices to each member of the society without adulteration. They desired that the profits, which go into the pockets of the retail dealer, should

go into their own. Under the credit system, the good payer has to make up for the defects of the bad. So, they resolved that nothing should be sold but for ready money. Their weekly subscription was 2d. each, and as soon as the money they had clubbed together was sufficient to buy a sack of meal, it was sold out to the members at cost price. Gradually their business extended; others joined as members, and they were able to deal in all the ordinary necessaries of life. As the society prospered, it extended its operations, always laying aside a portion of its gains for the literary improvement and otherwise of the members. By 1857, thirteen years after it was started, the association had a capital of nearly £2,500,000. The cost of management is only one per cent on the returns. Besides establishing libraries, news-rooms, and reading-rooms, for the benefit of its members, it has set on foot a large number of branches in or near the town. In 1866, it had 6246 members, and an income from goods sold of £249,122, and a profit of £31,931. Besides benefiting the members directly, it has had a most important effect in promoting temperance and thrift; and has led to the establishment of many similar societies throughout the north of England.

XII.

Glasgow Foundry Boys' Religious Society.—This great benevolent society for the benefit of working boys and girls of the lower classes in Glasgow, was

originated in 1865, although attempts on a smaller scale to benefit the young of that class had their origin at an earlier date. It was instituted "for the religious, educational, and social elevation of the vast numbers of boys employed in the foundries and workshops of the city." It is properly a religious society—the other departments, viz., the educational, the provident, and the social reform, being all subordinate to the first, and intended as helps to it. It is not denominational, but all its managing members must be in full communion with a Protestant Evangelical Church. Its administration is vested in a Board of Directors of not more than 18, chosen for three years by the members from among themselves. Though undenominational, it is always wishful to connect itself with the religious denominations of the districts in which its meetings are held, and to hold its Sunday meetings in the halls of such churches. Space does not permit of my entering into details of this admirably managed institution, which has been the means of Christianising and making useful members of society thousands of boys and girls, who, but for this, might have sunk into the ranks of the lapsed. Particulars will be found in the annual reports and programmes of daily and weekly operations published by the Society. Everything is done in the various meetings held throughout the city (which are held simultaneously, and in which exactly the same programme is gone through), to interest the boys and girls in religion and in benevolent and missionary schemes. Suffice it to say, that for the year 1882, there were 90 Sabbath meetings—*i. e.*, meetings held in 90 different places throughout the city; a membership of boys

and girls of 19,818, and of workers 2178, showing an immense progress since the first year of institution, when there were only two Sabbath meetings, 560 boys and girls in membership, and 14 regular, with 130 occasional, workers. During the same year, 1882, the income, including some small balances, amounted to £3421. In this was included, of voluntary contributions by the members for the Society's funds, and for infirmaries and other home benevolent institutions, £780; and for missionary operations abroad, £345.

XIII.

The author might have confirmed most of the statements made in the text regarding the condition of the poor and lapsed, from his own experience, but has preferred to give the corroborative testimony of others.

The following brief extracts from his own journal, written at the time of his visitation of a city parish, now a good few years ago, are quoted as praiseworthy examples of individual missionary action. "In all my rounds, nothing is more refreshing than the cheering accounts everywhere obtained of the kindness of the lady visitors. There is scarcely a home within the parish where sickness or destitution prevails, but they enliven and make happy by their kind deeds and soothing words. They go about from house to house in the poorer districts, distributing tracts, giv-

ing clothing to the destitute, speaking kind words of Christian sympathy, and reading the Scriptures and pious books to the sick and dying." Here follows from the same source a testimony to the pious and self-denying missionary labours of a plain working man. He and his wife had come from the country and settled down in a respectable but rather poor neighbourhood. "The husband and wife are both engaged in Sabbath-school teaching; and it was affirmed to me by one who had an opportunity of knowing, that the husband devotes a large portion of his wages (they had no family) to the purchase of tracts and useful books for the young; and that on a recent occasion, when he received a present from his fellow-workmen, he devoted a part of it for the same noble purpose." What might an army of home missionaries do if animated by the same spirit!

THE END.

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